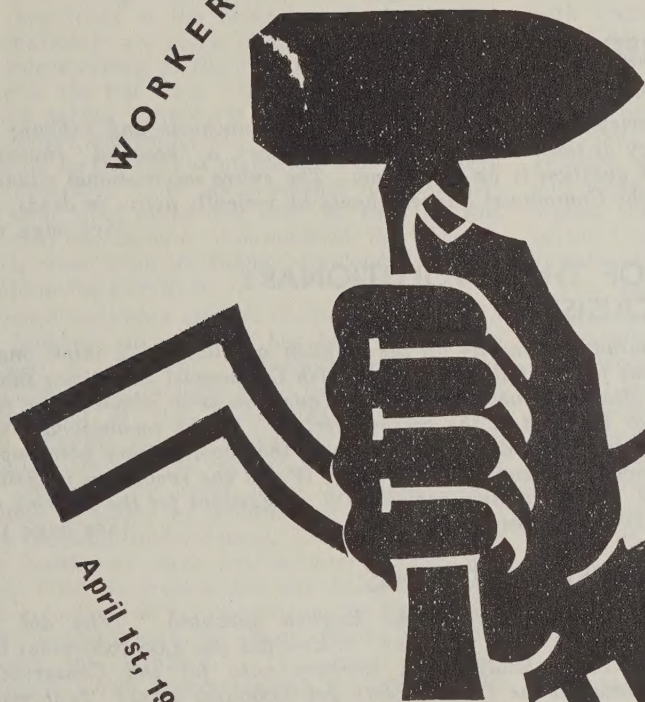


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## WAR AND THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

THE ruling classes and their agents and assistants in the Second and Amsterdam Internationals are doing their utmost to hide up the true meaning of the events which are taking place in the Far East. Unfortunately the Communist parties cannot yet be said to be evincing the proper determination, energy and skill in showing up the pacifist manoeuvres of the Geneva "peacemakers" and social-pacifist leaders. At the same time every day that is lost in this direction increases a thousandfold the dangers which result from the further development of the events in the Far East.

Armed resistance against the military attack of the Japanese upon China has been temporarily stopped as a result of negotiations on the Shanghai front, brought about by the treacherous capitulation of the Kuomintang Government. The Japanese have not evacuated the territory seized by them in the region of Shanghai but, on the contrary are using it to consolidate their position in China by maintaining an army of sixty thousand soldiers there. An armed struggle may break out there any moment. Simultaneously feverish preparations are being made for future, larger military conflicts on the Manchurian front—preparations for intervention by Japan against the U.S.S.R. The press of heavy industry, which represents the viewpoint of the most influential imperialist circles, is openly writing about the need for putting aside all sentimental feelings and is drawing all the necessary practical conclusions in connection with the fact that events in the Far East are already beginning to improve the position on the markets. The imperialist robbers are openly reckoning upon a way out of the crisis by means of war. All the data concerning the nature of events in the Far East proves that the decaying, unstable, only relative capitalist stabilisation which the ruling classes with the help of the social-fascist parties were able to institute after several defeats of the proletariat in Western Europe, and the ebb of the revolutionary tide of 1917-23, has now come to an end.

The end of capitalist stabilisation will mean that the capitalist world has arrived at a new cycle of imperialist wars and revolutions. It is not possible at the moment to predict how events in the Far East will develop, but the following can and should be said:

1. The material basis of the Japanese troops is not only Japan itself, but the European capitalist countries and, first and foremost, France, Czecho-

Slovakia and several German works connected with French imperialism.

2. There exists sufficient data to prove that apart from trade agreements on the question of the supply to Japan of armaments, there exist further between Japan and several of the most important Western-European capitalist countries (France and Poland) both military agreements and pacts. On the other hand, it is also well known that France dictates the foreign policies of the Czecho-Slovakian, Polish, Rumanian and Jugoslavian governments.

The assertion that this plunderous military advance on the part of Japan against Shanghai in the valley of Yangtse excludes any *direct* danger of intervention by Japan against the U.S.S.R. is purely opportunist: the world economic crisis and the state of agreement which exists between Japan and the largest Imperialist Powers regarding the creation of a *place d'armes* in Manchuria in preparation for an attack against the U.S.S.R., have loosed Japan's hands and helped her to begin an imperialist war of aggression inside China.

On the other hand, Japan is reckoning upon strengthening her own economic rear for further war against the U.S.S.R. by seizing new positions inside China and forcibly suppressing the anti-Japanese boycott.

It is true that the predatory advance of Japanese imperialism along the Yangtse valley may complicate her intervention against the U.S.S.R. in so far as the national revolutionary struggle of the Chinese toiling masses against the Japanese violators will continue to grow.

The assertion that the contradictions between Japan and the U.S.A., which have obviously sharpened in connection with the Japanese advance upon Shanghai, will to any real extent seriously weaken the danger of Japanese intervention against the U.S.S.R., is also opportunist. There is not the slightest doubt that the contradictions between Japan and the U.S.A are very deep, and that they will sooner or later lead to war between them (if revolution does not forestall it).

But these contradictions do not in any way prevent the U.S.A. from trying to urge Japan into war against the U.S.S.R. in the hope that a war of this kind will weaken at the same time both Japan—its own imperialist rival, and the U.S.S.R.—the class enemy in principle both of Japan and the U.S.A.

The constant, ever-increasing flow of arma-



ments from Western Europe to an address in Tokio can be interpreted in no other way than the most intensive preparations for intervention against the U.S.S.R. It is absolutely obvious that all the biggest munitions and chemical factories of Western Europe would not be mobilised merely for Japanese operations in China. It is absolutely obvious, furthermore, that preparations for the transfer of three million Japanese reservists to Manchuria would not be made merely for Manchurian operations, as the Japanese press, having been "passed" by the military censor, reported. On the contrary, these steps are a most eloquent confirmation of the documents published in "Izvestia" concerning the intention of the Japanese militarists to seize Siberia as far as Lake Baikal! Finally, we should mention the increased concentration of White Guard forces in the Far East, and open talk about the creation of an "independent" White Guard State in the Far East.

Thus, by way of summarising: *A plan on a large scale for a new military intervention by the imperialists against the U.S.S.R. has, in the main, already been prepared and may at any moment be put into operation. Besides Japan, France and Czecho-Slovakia are also taking an active part in direct immediate preparations for realising this plan.* There is every reason to believe that Poland has also concluded a military agreement with Japan, and that intervention on the part of Japan would be the signal for intervention on the part of Fascist Poland and vice versa. Rumania has also, side by side with Poland, been given the "honourable" rôle of outpost in the attack upon the U.S.S.R.; to a more or less extent the other neighbouring States are expected to take part as well. This is the main interpretation of the Far-Eastern events, which the social-fascists, and mere fascist-pacifists, are trying to blur over.

The international proletariat must react to these events with the maximum determination, speed and energy. Comrade Lenin wrote in 1915: "Peace propaganda at the present time, unaccompanied by a call to the masses for revolutionary action, is capable only of sowing illusions, of corrupting the proletariat into a belief in the humanitarianism of the bourgeoisie, and making it a plaything in the hands of secret diplomacy." These words written by Lenin in 1915 form the most important instruction to all Communist parties at this moment.

Socialist-fascist leaders on all sides try to prove that the Communists are trying to provoke war for the purpose of hastening on the revolution. This is a foul lie, which is spread for the purpose

of disorganising the ranks of the revolutionary working-class movement.

It is incumbent upon all Communist parties to strive (and they are striving, although unfortunately not energetically enough) to offer strong resistance to the imperialist war which has been begun by Japan in China, to do all they can to make it difficult for Japan to develop her predatory attack upon China, to hinder, obstruct and prevent in every way the conversion of this war into intervention against the U.S.S.R. and a new world war. It is in this sense that the Communist parties alone are fighting for peace. But this struggle for peace can only be truly successful if it sows no illusions among the proletarian masses to the effect that the bourgeoisie can be conquered by humanitarian phrases about peace; this struggle for peace can only be successful in so far as it is accompanied "by a call to the masses for revolutionary action"; only in so far as it is accompanied in each country by an increase in the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie, and increased unmasking of the pacifist deceit of the bourgeoisie and social-fascists.

The "struggle for peace" of social democracy is a pacifist smoke-screen, which is used to counteract the vigilance of the masses, to demobilise them and thus facilitate the opening of war hostilities.

Our struggle against war takes the form of the unmasking of all the small facts of the preparations for war; it is the mobilisation of the masses against war; it is the strengthening of revolutionary struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie all along the line.

Only in this way—by disorganising the rear, by building up a revolutionary rearguard—can we really prevent the bourgeoisie from hurling the people into open war, or war in a masked form. If the bourgeoisie, in spite of this, nevertheless takes the risk of plunging the country into war, we shall have been able, with all our pre-war, revolutionary anti-war work, to create certain pre-conditions which will help to realise our slogan of converting the imperialist war into civil war.

Comrade Molotov at the 17th Party Conference of the C.P.S.U. said that it was characteristic of the present moment that as time goes on it becomes more and more difficult to say where a state of peace ends and war begins. The ruling classes with the most active assistance of the social-fascist leaders, are adopting the tactic of a peculiar "peaceful transition" to war. It is in this way that the "transition" to war of France, Czecho-Slovakia and other Western European countries is taking place at the present time.



This transition begins with the reconstruction of industry to serve war purposes and the systematic despatch of munitions to Japan. It is further expressed in the increased despatch of troops to the Far East. Czecho-Slovakia does not send its own troops, but together with France organises the transport of Russian white guards and officers to lead them, and organises diversional activities inside the U.S.S.R. Neither does Germany send troops to the Far East, but German fascist bands, whose leaders barter with French imperialism concerning the conditions under which they will serve, are preparing country-revolutionary civil war in Germany for the purpose of smashing up the German Communist Party and other revolutionary organisations of the German proletariat, in order to convert Germany in this way into an additional *place d'armes* besides those in Poland and Rumania, for military intervention against the U.S.S.R. from the West, while Japan will act from the East.

The proletariat must oppose this method used by the bourgeoisie of a "quiet transition to war," by launching out with a revolutionary struggle to prepare for revolution. Of course, the forms which this launching of the revolutionary struggle will take in the different countries will vary. There will be methods of one sort in the imperialist countries which make the attack (Japan), others in the semi-colonial country which is being attacked—China. Methods of one kind in countries which are fighting, and others in countries which are being drawn, or threaten to be drawn, into the war in one way or another. Of course, there will be various methods of preparing for revolution, depending upon the extent to which the objective situation and subjective factors in each country are ripe for revolution. But the line of preparation for revolution in answer to the line of the bourgeoisie—of transition to war, should be taken everywhere.

Japan is the country where the line of preparation for revolution should go forward under defeatist slogans with the prospect of converting the imperialist war into civil war. Our Communist Party in Japan is obliged to explain to the workers and peasants that their interests do not lie in going to plunder and kill their Chinese brothers in poverty, but in freeing themselves of their own oppressors; that the defeat of Japan in imperialist warfare does not mean the defeat of the Japanese people who did not want war, but on the contrary will facilitate the victory of the Japanese workers and peasants over the Japanese feudal-bourgeois monarchy. Our Japanese Communist Party is still young and numerically weak. Nevertheless, it is putting this line into operation correctly and with great heroism, thus setting an example which other Communist parties should

follow. As far as can be judged from the incomplete information to hand, the Communist Party of Japan is occupying an absolutely correct position, demanding the recall of Japanese troops from China and calling upon the workers and peasants to do all they can to help the defeat of their "own" government. In spite of the conditions of heaviest military and police terror inside the country, the Communist Party of Japan, occupying a correct, anti-militarist, defeatist position, is publishing mass anti-war literature, organising meetings, leading strikes, demonstrations, mass revolutionary activities among the peasantry, and carrying on tireless work among the troops on the Manchurian and Shanghai fronts. Despite the strict military censure, there have already appeared in the press reports concerning disorders among the Japanese troops. The Japanese Command officers, furthermore, have been compelled to admit that two hundred Japanese soldiers had to be sent back to their own country because they were apparently "homesick." This forced recognition of the facts by the Japanese Command shows that the work of the Japanese Communist Party among the troops was not in vain. The workers of all countries should give the utmost assistance and support to the Japanese Communists. The fall of the Japanese monarchy and the formation upon its ruins of a revolutionary democratic government, built upon Soviets of Workers, Soldiers, Sailors' and Peasants' deputies, would overthrow all the militarist plans and anticipations of the imperialist plunderers, and would without doubt serve as the beginning of a new mighty wave of international proletarian revolution. Such a perspective is absolutely realistic; we must steer such a course.

The Chinese Communist Party is faced with tasks somewhat different from those of the Japanese Communist Party. China is not waging an imperialist war. It is a semi-colonial country, the object of imperialist offensive on the part of Japan. Correspondingly, the Chinese Communist Party cannot take up a defeatist position towards the Chinese war of defence; it cannot make its attitude towards war identical with its attitude towards the counter-revolutionary Kuomintang government. The Chinese Communist Party, while aiming its main attack against the Japanese invaders at the present moment, nevertheless must fan the flame of this war to develop it into a national-liberation war of the toiling masses of China; into a war of the armed people of China against the imperialist plunderers and, first and foremost, against Japanese imperialism. At the same time it should relentlessly criticise the predatory position of the Kuomintang Government before the broad masses of China, explain how the Kuomintang



Government sabotages the defence of China and is preparing for complete capitulation before Japanese imperialism in order to clear the way for a new advance against Soviet China. The Chinese Communist Party is operating this policy now, and the international proletariat must do all it can to help the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people in their struggle for the independence of China. To defend China from partition among the imperialists and, first and foremost, from the Japanese imperialist robbers, to defend the Chinese Soviets and the whole cause of the Chinese revolution is the most important obligation of the international proletariat, and is at the same time a most important composite part of the defence of the U.S.S.R.

The slogans of the Communist Parties in Japan and in China cannot now be the same; but both in Japan and in China these slogans must become sharper as the revolutionary crisis grows and ripens.

The slogans of the Japanese Communist Party in connection with the soldiers on the Chinese front should aim at disorganising the rapacious war; should be a call to the soldiers to return home; to help the workers and peasant masses who are left to fight against the landlords, capitalists and landlord-bourgeois monarchy. As the revolutionary crisis develops, much sharper slogans should be put forward—elections for soldiers' soviets; disposal of the reactionary Command and the launching of civil war. The slogans of the Chinese Communist Party on the Japanese front should be: mobilisation of all the forces of the country to drive out the Japanese and other imperialist robbers; development on all sides of a guerilla movement in the rearguard of the Japanese troops; elections to soldiers' committees; appointment through these committees of a revolutionary command and political commissars. As the process goes forward of unmasking before the masses the predatory, capitulating policy of the national government and certain sections of the commanding officers during the present war, there should be begun a revolutionary struggle against them, the destruction of the reactionary Kuomintang Command, the overthrow of the Kuomintang Nanking Government and the creation of a revolutionary government based upon the Soviets of soldiers' and workers' deputies, which will take upon itself the initiative of uniting with the government of the Soviet regions and linking up the whole of China under the slogans of the national-liberation anti-imperialist war and agrarian revolution.

Quite another is the task of fighting against war in the Communist parties of European capitalist countries and the U.S.A. For countries

like Holland, Switzerland and so on, which in the present stage of imperialist wars will, as far as can be seen, play the rôle of "neutral" speculators, transporting munitions and other supplies to the fighting countries, the most important, immediate task of the working class is, side by side with the launching of a mass campaign of protest meetings, demonstrations, strikes, and other means of mass struggle—to hinder in every way the use of the territory, industry, state and trading apparatus of their country for the purpose of assisting the Japanese militarists and their partners of to-morrow to launch intervention against the U.S.S.R.

Unlimited responsibility to the international working-class movement rests especially with the Communist Parties of countries like France, England, the U.S.A., Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Rumania. The Communist Parties of these countries should use all available forms of mass action on the part of the workers and peasants to prevent the transport of munitions intended for use against China and the U.S.S.R. At the same time it should be remembered that the rôle of the imperialist robbers in the Far-Eastern adventure is on no account merely restricted to the function of supplying munitions and so on, to Japan.

As for their attitude to China, the imperialist robbers aim at getting China completely into their clutches and dividing the spoil, and they furthermore intend to use the present military activities on Chinese territory for the purpose of the better preparing military intervention against the U.S.S.R. from the Far East, in conjunction with similar intervention from the West. The attitude of the imperialist Powers to Japan, and this includes the U.S.A. despite all the contradictions between the two countries, is to utilise the avarice of the ruling classes of this country and her military equipment for the purpose of setting Japan against the U.S.S.R. and giving Japan all the necessary technical means as well as live human material (in the immediate future—Russian White-Guards) for this purpose.

It is almost certain that without the support of the strongest European States, Japan would never have risked what she is now doing with the most ardent determination.

On the other hand, the question as to whether the governments of the imperialist Powers which are helping Japan at present will be able in the very near future to convert the Japano-Chinese war into intervention against the U.S.S.R. and world war depends on the activity of our Communist parties, on their ability to fuse with the broad masses, on their ability to mobilise these masses against war, on their ability to launch



the revolutionary struggle of the masses. Our parties are faced with the most responsible historic task, yet we must place on record that, so far, they have not fulfilled this task to anything like the necessary extent. Comrade Thorès in the political report of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party to the VII. Congress of the party, which opened on March 11 this year, declared that the Communist Party of France up to quite recently has underestimated the danger of new imperialist wars, and that in consequence there are big shortcomings in the anti-militarist activities of the party. Moreover, the French Communist Party has a great responsibility as regards war and new intervention against the U.S.S.R., for French imperialism is the chief culprit, the chief organiser. The estimate of the anti-imperialist activities of the French Communist Party, given by Comrade Thorès at the VII. Congress, perhaps with small amendments on the credit side, should be repeated as regards the Communist parties of the other large Imperialist States which are taking part in the preparations for new intervention against the U.S.S.R.

It is just this under-estimation of the danger of new intervention and the weakness of the anti-militarist work, which explains, first and foremost, why the anti-militarist struggle of the European Communist Parties at the present moment mainly amounts merely to the passing of resolutions and, at most, the arranging of meetings and comparatively not very large demonstrations. *Yet the question is an acute one. The entire international situation demands that the Communist Parties of all countries where the bourgeoisie is participating in preparations for fresh intervention against the U.S.S.R. should be violently active, active in deeds, not words.*

Of course, a further explanatory campaign is essential. It should even be increased, especially as regards unmasking all the pacifist manoeuvres of the social-democratic leaders. But side by side with this work of unmasking the traitors and explaining the true state of affairs to the workers, there must also be action, for the international proletariat has the right to demand action from the Communist parties of those countries where there are thousands, tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of members (Germany for instance), and hundreds of thousands, even millions of sympathisers who support the party at elections and during mass political campaigns.

What sort of action should this be?

It is a question, of course, first and foremost, of mass activities: (1) strikes in workshops connected with munitions and in transport undertakings—complete strikes; partial strikes in

individual departments of factories; short-term "Italian strikes," etc.; (2) protest demonstrations; (3) Japanese emissaries who have the insolence to supervise the fulfilment of orders for this war beneath the noses of the workers to be demonstratively driven out of the workshops; (4) there should be a mass campaign that will lead to concrete steps being taken to prevent the transport of munitions.

It is not possible to put through all these measures at one and the same time and place. *But we must begin to act.* At first we must begin with the more important places, concentrate our best forces there and take as a starting point the more primitive forms of mass activity. Only in this way will the masses become accustomed to the struggle, will become steeled in the fight, will gain the experience for more complicated, higher forms of class struggle.

The struggle against the peaceful transition to war should be linked up with the general strengthening of the mass economic and political struggle against the bourgeoisie. The more these struggles are developed, which open up the prospect of a revolutionary way out of the crisis, the more easy will it be to resist the attempts of the bourgeoisie to find a capitalist way out of the crisis by means of war. "War feeds the unemployed," cynically declare the bourgeoisie, while they load more work on to the munitions factories. The task of the Communists is to unmask the hidden deceit behind this slogan; to show that this slogan gives bread to individuals, and lead to the millions. We must oppose this slogan with our slogan: the unemployed can be fed only along the lines of revolutionary struggle, by the way of October.

All our parties should learn the lesson of the last general strike in Poland. Although it was not directly aimed against war, nevertheless it manifested the revolutionary mood of the workers which was a very serious menace to military adventures. It is significant that the munitions factories also took part in this general economic strike, incidentally.

These are the ways in which we will be able to hinder the ruling classes from launching forth with their criminal, counter-revolutionary, militarist plans. If world imperialism nevertheless has the insolence to raise the question of war now, the work of mobilising the masses against war will considerably lighten the task of converting the imperialist war into civil war. The parties will certainly have to make sacrifices in preparing and carrying forward activities against war. But how can the revolutionary party of the proletariat fight otherwise? There is no struggle without sacrifices and the further we go, the harder the



struggle, and the need for making further, heavier sacrifices will inevitably grow.

But these sacrifices will be repaid a hundred-fold. Our parties must once and for all clear out the remains of all the weight of social democratic legalism which is still strong in the ranks of the working-class movement. They must grind into the minds of the broad masses the fact that however great the sacrifices in the acute revolutionary stages, they are immeasurably less than the innumerable sacrifices which the proletariat has had to suffer over years and years and is still suffering under the bondage of political slavery.

In this respect our parties should follow the examples of the Chinese and Japanese Communist parties. If our big Western European parties were to show the degree of heroism manifested at the present moment under circumstances of extreme terror by our small militant Japanese Communist Party, which from the very beginning of the war has carried on an open defeatist policy, then we should be standing much closer to revolution in several of the countries of the West to-day.

We are on the eve of a new stretch of wars and revolutions. Our central committees and other leading party organs should rebuild their organisations to suit the new militant conditions. They should determinedly break away from the routine work, which settled down upon them as

a result of the years of partial stabilisation and from which even in the years of economic crisis our parties were not able to free themselves.

The reconstruction of the parties' work should, first and foremost and in the shortest possible period of time, be made in connection with our anti-militarist work. We must pass on from words to deeds.

In the situation which exists at present it is especially important to develop the maximum initiative of the masses, so that the workers and peasants on every hand and wherever the opportunity arises, should organise their elected committees of action and make use of every concrete opportunity for the purpose of disorganising the economic, fascist advance of the bourgeoisie and their gradual transition to war.

The conditions at present differ radically from those on the eve of 1914, when there was no Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, when there was no revolutionary movement in the colonies, when the proletariat of Western Europe had had no revolutionary experience.

If our parties can develop the same enormous degree of furious activity as that developed by the bourgeoisie and social-democracy now, in their search after a capitalist war out of the crisis by means of war, then they will be able to get the war postponed or, if war breaks out in spite of everything, they will be able to convert it into civil war.

**British readers write for**

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# THE REVOLUTIONARY WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS IN ENGLAND

*(Comrade Manuilsky's Speech at the English Commission.)*

**T**HE main task of the English Communist Party is to raise in concrete fashion the question of the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

The failure of the English Communist Party at the recent elections is not only the far-distant results of the policy of several generations of the English bourgeoisie which, on the bones of the Egyptian fellaheen, on the bones of the Indian workers and peasants, has created the privileged aristocracy of labour in England. The failure of the English Communist Party is connected not only with the fact that the English bourgeoisie has not yet begun to shoot down the English working class, and that legalist illusions have not yet been lived down in broad sections of the English workers. The French proletariat waged civil war during the Paris Commune. The German proletariat fought in the civil war during the German revolution of 1918-19, the German proletariat offers up its bloody sacrifices every day now. Parliamentary illusions are sown here much more rapidly than in England. But this is not the only point. I think that one of the main reasons for the failure of the English Communist Party at the elections was that it did not give a clearly defined answer to the question as to which future road of development was possible for England in the present period. It had against it the enormous apparatus of the bourgeoisie, its apparatus of repression, its press, Parliament, Church, schools, army and hundreds and thousands of copies of the bourgeois programme of a capitalist way out of the crisis.

On the other hand, the Labour Party was able, as well, with the help of the one million circulation of the "Daily Herald," to launch out on a broad scale with its election programme.

Our party did a fine thing when it seized upon the immediate demands of the English working class; but it made a mistake when it failed to indicate the revolutionary way out of the crisis in a clear defined way; it did not show the workers its own way of solving the present crisis. I have no desire to hurt the feelings of our English comrades, but I must say that the "Daily Worker" sometimes gives the impression of being an emigrant paper. Can the Communist Party mobilise the masses without answering the questions which are closest to the hearts of the English workers?

When the Bolshevik party in its early days had to give the workers an answer as to the fate of Russian development, Lenin wrote a book on the

conditions of development of capitalism, where he clearly laid down the tendencies of social development of the epoch. When, on the eve of the October Revolution in 1917, our country was passing through a deep crisis, which had developed on the basis of the war upheaval, the toiling masses were seeking a way out and each worker and peasant was asking the question as to whether they would, having seized power in their own hands, be able to hold out in the face of the entire armed capitalist world, Lenin produced his brilliant pamphlet: "Will the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?" in which he answered all these doubts.

Could the revolutionary party of England avoid these questions which are to-day worrying every English worker? The bourgeois parties in England answered the question as to a way out of the crisis in their own way. They proposed a way out along the capitalist road. There were two parties which gave no answer—the Liberals and our Party. And they both met failure. The Liberals found themselves an insignificant fraction in Parliament, represented by the Lloyd-George family; and the Communists did not win a single seat.

The question of the revolutionary way out of the crisis is most closely connected with the criticism of the programmes of the capitalist way out of the crisis. Had the English Communist Party seriously placed this question before the Party, it would most likely have avoided the mistakes made during the elections. It would have been compelled to criticise the programme put forward by the Conservative Party for a capitalist way out of the crisis. It would have had also to criticise the Labour Party programme for a capitalist way out of the crisis. Events in England should be approached from the point of view of large, bold prospects. They are events on a universal, historic scale.

First of all, the gold standard has been abolished in England. This fact is of importance not only for England. England has dragged half the capitalist world into the abyss of financial crisis. The rate of exchange in 36 countries is fluctuating heavily. The abolition of the gold standard has undermined the basis of England's world hegemony. Because of the English crisis not only those countries where the rate of exchange fluctuates are affected, but also those countries where the rate of exchange is still stable. Since the gold security of several countries con-



sisted of English banknotes, the fact that the English pound has crashed has affected other countries as well. For instance, the Banque de France has lost 2½ billion francs as a result of the fall of the pound sterling.

What does the fall of the pound sterling mean from the viewpoint of international relations? It means the downfall of English hegemony. Is this fall a temporary phenomenon? No. If it is permissible to talk of increased French hegemony at the present moment as a temporary phenomenon; if, on the other hand, we can speak of the fall in the relative position of the U.S.A. as a temporary phenomenon, the same cannot be said of the fall in the relative position of England. This fall is the expression of a prolonged process, it is one of the stages in the downfall of the British Empire.

England has four billion pounds sterling invested abroad, of which a considerable part is in the form of loans in pounds sterling. As a result of the inflation, huge sums of money have been lost on these investments which, together with the sharp drop in value resultant upon the fall in prices and the price of bonds, amounts to a loss of one billion pounds, i.e., 25 per cent. of her foreign investments alone. When the ruling class takes measures of this kind, this means that enormous events are taking place of immense historic importance.

It was the catastrophe with the pound sterling that brought about the fall of the Labour Government. It brought about a split among the Liberals, a split in the Labour Party. Political re-groupings are taking place; in connection with these, the class war is growing more acute, and this must not be ignored by the British Communist Party when deciding upon its tactics.

Finally, the introduction of protective tariffs is also an event which cannot be looked upon as secondary in importance. The history of England has seen an acute struggle around the question of protective tariffs. The fight between the Free Traders and the Tariff Reformers went on from 1835 to 1860, the Free Traders coming out victorious in the end. Since then free trade has been one of the recognised institutions of capitalist society in England. The attempt made by Joe Chamberlain in the beginning of the twentieth century to introduce tariffs met with such strong resistance that he was forced to resign. Yet of late the evolution from Free Trade to Protective Tariffs has proceeded not only among the bourgeoisie, but amongst the trade unions also. This means that the age-long policy of England in the sphere of trade is changing. And we cannot ignore all these changes; we must give the workers an answer to all the questions which

arise therefrom, by presenting them with our programme of a revolutionary way out of the crisis.

What should the programme of the revolutionary way out of the crisis contain? There should be three main points. The first—a criticism of the Conservative programme of a capitalist way out of the crisis; the second—a criticism of the Labour Party programme; and finally—our own programme of the revolutionary way out of the crisis. This is the more essential since the slogan of the revolutionary way out of the crisis is used by the Communist Party in a purely abstract form, without any concrete explanation, and becomes converted into a sort of sacramental formula.

What was the programme of the Conservative Party? The Conservative Party outlined three-fold measures for the capitalist way out of the crisis. Not only did it outline these measures, but it put them into operation. Long before putting them into operation the English politicians raised the question of a prolonged crisis of parasitic capitalism in England. The famous report of the Balfour Commission dealt with the same question. The May Commission and the MacMillan Commission dealt with this question. What did the Conservative Government do with the two proposals of May and MacMillan? It began to put both combined programmes into operation in enormous doses. First of all, it introduced a direct cut in the wages of civil servants and sailors and cut down social insurance. This was its first measure along the road of its offensive against the working class. Secondly, it introduced inflation which immediately affected the standard of living of the working class. Finally, it began to introduce protective tariffs, which were also part of the scheme to rob the working class.

Our Party was able to mobilise the masses around the immediate demands of the working class. But the task of the Communist Party was also to use the arguments which the workers could understand to explain that the programme of the bourgeoisie would not save English capitalism.

At the same time, moreover, our Party should have seriously studied the measures introduced by the bourgeoisie. For it must not be imagined that the measures of Baldwin and MacDonald are, as it were, the result of capitalist stupidity, and that universal reason, as Hegel puts it, is pervading those who carelessly avoid any serious analysis of the arguments of the class enemy.

If we take the measures proposed by the English bourgeoisie, we find that in the critical position in which English capitalism at present



finds itself, they are, according to the bourgeoisie, reasonable; reasonable, of course, only from the viewpoint of a capitalist way out of the crisis, from the viewpoint of the interests of capitalism. Take the question of inflation. England has lost in foreign investments, but what has English capitalism gained by the introduction of inflation? First of all, it has lowered the cost of production. It has approximately lowered the cost of constant capital by one-quarter. It has lowered the amortisation expenditure on this constant capital. And incidentally the question of high amortisation expenses of capitalism is a question of life or death to capitalism. You remember the discussion on "organised" capitalism which took place two or three years ago. It is no accident that people like Schmalenbach wrote that the fundamental sickness of modern capitalist economy is the high cost of production connected with the huge amortisation costs upon the constant capital.

We know that these measures have failed to overcome the economic crisis, to stop the fall of English economy. But it is useless simply to avoid this question, as Comrades Pollitt and Arnot did. The fact remains that after inflation certain branches of industry in England raised their production: for instance, the textile industry. Admitting that the Chinese boycott of Japanese goods, and speculation upon war in connection with events in China also played a large part in increasing the production of the textile industry, for war is not the last element in the attempts of the bourgeoisie to find a way out of the crisis along capitalist lines. But the fact remains that thanks to inflation English capitalism lowered the burden of invested capital—which lay heavy upon her—by 20-25 per cent. The fact remains indisputable that side by side with the loss of £1 billion on foreign investments, English capitalism lowered its internal State debt by 25 per cent. as well. If we take into consideration that the English internal debt amounts to £7½ billion sterling, then we cannot leave this fact aside by declaring that capitalism has not achieved its end. It goes without saying, further, that in introducing inflation English capitalism reckoned, on the one hand, upon creating a premium on the export of its own goods and, on the other hand, upon automatically raising the duty upon foreign goods: in other words, it reckoned upon setting up a tariff wall. The measures of English capitalism followed a definite aim. Has this aim been achieved? Here we have to admit that these measures have not yet produced the results expected by English capitalism.

First of all, what is the position as regards competition on foreign markets? When inflation was introduced in England all the capitalist coun-

tries immediately replied by increasing customs tariffs. Canada introduced its so-called dumping duties. Italy raised its duties by 15 per cent. literally the day afterwards. France introduced the so-called discriminating duties, specially directed against English goods. The customs fight became acute throughout the world. Persia introduced a government monopoly of foreign trade. Turkey established contingents on imports. The question of defence against English competition is a vital question throughout the capitalist world to-day, which is retaliating against the measures of English capital on the following lines: increased customs duties, contingencies, i.e., in other words, prohibition of imports and of transactions in foreign currency. Since the rate of exchange has come to a catastrophe not only in England but in 36 capitalist countries as well, and as England's trade with countries where the rate of exchange is stable is approximately equal to 12-15 per cent., hence we can conclude that English capitalism has not gained on the international arena. What the Communists foretold has come to pass. A violent customs war has broken out. All the consequences of inflation and protection have been laid upon the working class inside the country. It is not international capital which, in its trading relations pays the difference between foreign and home prices on English goods; the English worker, the Indian peasant, the Egyptian fellah are paying it now. Here are the first results of inflation and protective tariffs in England.

On the other hand, these measures cannot bring positive results, because besides the direct increase of customs duties, all the capitalist countries are pursuing a policy of increased dumping.

Let us try to map out the prospects of the policy which the English bourgeoisie are operating. Let us, for instance, suppose that during the coming months and years the capitalist world will drag itself out of this crisis along capitalist lines; let us suppose further that neither in Germany, nor in England will there occur any events of decisive importance during this period. What are the prospects before us if the capitalist way out of the crisis, proposed by the Conservative Party, is achieved?

The die-hards are reckoning upon a united Empire, but this is very closely connected for England with a new blow against her hegemony in the countries of Latin America. How can England surround herself with a tariff wall, having united the Dominions and colonies into one Empire, when she has considerable investments in countries like Brazil and Argentine in Latin America? And it is no accident that just at this time such facts should stand out as the despatch



of an Argentine Commission to England to regulate a series of questions. And it is also no accident that just now American capitalism is making the most of the crisis in order to aim blow after blow in systematic succession against English influence in Argentina, in Brazil and in other countries of Latin America. No matter what tours are made by Thomas to the Dominions, or when the Conference with the Dominions may take place, which is to introduce customs tariffs on second-category English goods (first category includes foodstuffs; second, semi-manufactured goods; third, manufactured goods)—is there the least doubt that the introduction of protective tariffs in England and the dumping of English goods on the markets of the Empire, which is connected with it, is a deathblow to the industry of the Dominions and to the young industries of India? It is hardly likely that the Dominions will reconcile themselves to a blow like this against their industry.

Thirdly, what does it amount to—the fact that England has enclosed itself against the whole world behind protective tariffs? It is an attempt to put into practice the wild theory, which in capitalist conditions is madness, and which is advocated by several bourgeois economists: the theory of so-called economic autarchy. Now all the bourgeois States are trying to crawl out of the crisis on “Self-help” lines. The basis of all these theories is the slogan: “Save your own skin, if you can.” It is no accident, therefore, that the Monroe doctrine—America for the Americans—has been resurrected in all its primitive grossness. It is no accident that a campaign has been raised in the American Senate against Hoover, against his interference in European affairs. What does the system on “*a la longue vue*” lines, i.e., over a long period, mean? It means that world economy is to be split up into pieces. And doubtless the result of this will be that approximately the same position will arise as existed during the war, when world economy was torn into sections, when each section as the result of blockade became wrapped up in itself, when each State tried to become entirely self-supporting, tried to develop its own industry; and this very considerably worsened the position of world capitalism. Protective tariffs lead to analogous consequences and will still further worsen the position of English capitalism.

Thus, first of all, a criticism must be made of these bourgeois measures in order to show the English working class that measures along capitalist lines for a way out of the crisis will not save the English bourgeoisie.

Next, we have the programme of the Labour Party. What did we say about this programme? Did we criticise it seriously? I think not. The

Labour Party programme puts forward certain demands: control of trusts, nationalisation of the most important branches of industry, nationalisation of the banks, planned economy and rationalisation, already mentioned in the report of the Balfour Commission, and finally, disarmament and the regulation of war debts and reparations on an international scale.

I shall begin with the most important, the main question, which is at the moment a matter of life and death for English capitalism: the question of rationalisation of English industry.

What does this rationalisation mean for English economy? Why is it brought up so acutely at the present time? Gigantic changes have taken place in the whole system of world economy. A Power like the U.S.A. has grown up. Since the war the trans-Atlantic countries have grown up. The colonial and semi-colonial countries, true on a limited scale, have also developed their industries. Then Japan is now one of the most important countries competing against English textiles. And when a few months ago Japanese cloth appeared in Lancashire, it caused the sort of sensation one would expect if, say, the “Communist Manifesto” were to be found on the table of the Pope of Rome.

Further, competition has become more acute among the European countries which have rationalised their industry. After the war, during the period of capitalist stabilisation, two countries more than any others rationalised their industry—the U.S.A. and Germany; England rationalised her industries only to a very small extent.

Finally, in connection with the Dawes and Young Plans, the question of exports has become a vital question for Germany. It is no accident that German economists and politicians have begun to declare at international conferences: “If you demand payment from us, then we must export; our export therefore must exceed the export of other countries.” Neither is it an accident that, for instance, Germany is surpassing the United States in the sphere of exports to Latin America.

Finally, once more, during the years of stabilisation enormous technical changes came about. Oil has begun to displace coal—the basis of the old traditional English economy. The production of artificial silk is striking a blow at Lancashire.

On the other hand, the development of the U.S.S.R. is the main historic factor of our epoch which decisively influences all the post-war economic and political relations.

Throughout the capitalist world huge changes have taken place. And the statesmen of England



dream of restoring the old position. A revolution in economics, one might say, has taken place, and the political outlook has remained the same as before. And the question of rationalisation in England is a question not only of technical improvements for English industry. It is no accident that in Balfour's Report we find, for instance, that the best equipped undertakings in England have turned out to be the least adaptable to world competition. The question of rationalisation in England is now a question of changing its whole social and economic structure to correspond with the changes that have taken place on the world arena. This "revolution," this change, in the social and economic structure of England can be made only by a new class, brave and young.

To restore the old position—and illusions like this are supported among the English working class by MacDonald and Thomas—is impossible. But what does it mean to reconstruct English economy to correspond with the changes that have taken place? It demands bold measures. If it were possible to imagine that rationalisation of this kind could be done along capitalist lines, what would it mean? It would mean that the capitalist apparatus would have to reconstruct the whole of its industry to make it possible for those branches to be developed and extended which have the opportunity, at present, of successfully selling their goods upon the international market and, on the other hand, it would mean to cut down, to curtail, to close down, those branches of industry which are at the moment superfluous, and the technical and economic structure of which are extremely backward. This would mean to forcibly sequester undertakings, transfer labour power from certain undertakings to others, close down the road for the flow of capital abroad; in other words, it would mean to make an invasion upon the "holy of holies" of capitalist society, upon the institution of private property.

Do you think that Maxton and the Labour Party will put through revolutionary measures of this kind to rationalise English industry, to adapt it to the new conditions? These measures can be put through only by a young, fresh force—a mighty Communist Party on the road to proletarian dictatorship.

Moreover, take the second question of nationalisation. I think that there is no need here to prove that nationalisation within the framework of a capitalist State only strengthens the position of the bourgeoisie and is no demand of ours. But see what heights of demagoguery are reached on the international arena around the question of nationalisation, of State control over the banks, trusts, and so on. When in the annals of history has there ever been control on the part of a Bourgeois State over the trusts with any positive

results? Recently in Germany we saw an attempt on the part of German social-democracy to put forward the slogan of control over prices. It gave no results at all. We have seen proletarian dictatorship in history. It is instituted in the U.S.S.R. And yet the English worker still believed in nationalisation, in control over trusts in capitalist conditions, but he does not believe in the possibility of a Soviet England. Take all the demagoguery that is being spread in several capitalist States in connection with the fact that after the banks went bankrupt the State frequently takes upon itself the security for payment. The Austrian social democrats like Otto Bauer call it "State capitalism" and "nationalisation." But this is the nationalisation of losses, the nationalisation of economic downfall, leaving the profits to capital. And I think that with regard to these questions again, which were brought up in the Labour Party programme, we did not answer sufficiently.

Further, take the question of disarmaments which is being toyed with by social democracy at the present moment. Can we not prove now on the concrete example of the Disarmament Conference of February, 1932, that the bourgeoisie were in actual fact preparing the war in Manchuria under the flag of Disarmament. Who in Europe now believes that the February conference will bring the smallest sign of disarmament? And yet this conference was one of the points in the Labour Party programme. Did we show to the workers that this disarmament is a pacifist screen behind which the Japanese war in Manchuria is hidden?

Take another point in the international programme of the Labour Party—the question of reparations and the regulation of reparations and war debts. It is obvious to the blind that a fight has begun between the three capitalist Powers: France, England and America, around the question of reparations and debts. If England and America get the priority over short-term private debts, then France will seek to obtain priority over reparations. What is taking place in Basle now is merely the prelude. We still do not know the decision on this question, but we can foresee that French capital wishes to have the material property of Germany as a security against the payment of reparations: it wants Germany's workshops, its railways. Thus the German working class is being further robbed by world capital. I think that in examining the question of a way out of the crisis, these problems should be touched upon. We should give an answer to these questions and criticise the programme of the Labour Party.

Finally, the third point—the question of the revolutionary way out of the crisis. Have we the right to disregard the fears which are still



strong in the mind of every English worker concerning the difficulties connected with the English revolution? If the English Communist Party wishes to avoid finding itself a stranger in its own land, it should give an answer to this question. Usually when comrades speak on the question of the prospects of the English revolution, they either stop at general arguments and slogans, or seize hold of the difficulties. The thing which it is most essential to emphasise in connection with the question of the revolutionary way out of the crisis, is the fact that the proletarian revolution in England will not remain an isolated event in the British Isles, will not be an isolated act of the English proletariat. It will, without doubt, meet with a rapid response in the form of revolutionary struggles in other capitalist countries of the world, especially in Europe. It should not be forgotten, moreover, that with the example of the Russian proletariat before it, the working class of England will not be taking a jump into the unknown, but will be able to make use of the wealthy experiences of the Soviet Union as regards overcoming primary difficulties, successfully resisting counter-revolution and setting into order the economies of the proletarian dictatorship.

Consequently, the question, "Will the English proletariat maintain power?" must not be separated from the world revolutionary movement or from the fact of the existence of the U.S.S.R. and the successful construction of socialism which is going on therein.

Take further the question of the reconstruction of England. It must not be thought that after the English revolution everything will remain as before, that the colonies, grateful at being "freed," will as before represent an extremely large market for English industrial goods, will willingly supply England with raw materials and so on. The revolutionary way out of the crisis cannot be thought of in terms of approximately the present State formations of British capitalism.

First and foremost the question of the revolutionary way out of the crisis in England is the question of the revolutionary break-up of the whole system of the capitalist world. It must be clearly seen that the English revolution is a revolution on the five continents of the globe. It is a revolution in Asia including India, in South Africa, in Australia, in Canada, in Latin America. And this means that all international relations, State, political and economic, which were built up on the basis of capitalism and the international division of labour introduced by capitalism on the basis of the Versailles system and partition of the world, will be broken. And the main questions on the road to solving the economic and political tasks of the English proletariat should be examined from the viewpoint of this new

situation. Newbold and the Conservatives scare the English working class with the thought that after the revolution they will die of hunger on their island. The question of feeding England is certainly an acute one. England is not the United States with its extensive inner resources of foodstuffs and raw materials. It is not the Soviet Union. England imports 48 per cent. of its food from the colonies and the Dominions. If the Communist Party of England intends raising the question of the revolutionary way out of the crisis in concrete, practical form, then it should tell the English workers how to feed themselves in the new circumstances. If you are a mass, national, party, then you must answer the workers on this question of food. I have no intention of giving an exhaustive reply to this question. This answer has to be very closely connected up with the prospects of all those economic and political perturbations which will take place as a result of the English revolution. But I must say that there are people who affirm that if such a position were to occur, when England was blockaded on all sides, that it would, with certain small deprivations for the nation at large, be in a position to hold out, if it developed to the utmost the production of foodstuffs on the islands.

Before the war a book was published by Franz Oppenheimer proving on the basis of figures that this would be possible. The English Communists have not yet raised this problem. They must raise it. The question as to whether England will starve or not to a very large degree depends on the question as to what rôle the English fleet will play at the moment of revolution. And the events in the English fleet in Invergordon have shown that the fleet would probably not be inimical to the people if the Communist Party is sufficiently active in a revolutionary way in the fleet during the pre-revolutionary period.

The second problem on which the English Party must give an answer to the English-workers is the problem of raw materials for English industry. England has an enormous industrial apparatus, and yet at the same time the main sources of raw materials for her industries are on the other side of the ocean. What is the position as regards raw materials? Under the present capitalist structure, those in favour of protective tariffs are counting upon creating a completely hide-bound Empire. For example, Baron Melchett—the chemical king of England—reckoned that Great Britain controls 27 per cent. of the world production of wheat, 66 per cent. rice, 53 per cent. horned cattle, 51 per cent. sheep, 69 per cent. gold, 42 per cent. tin, 88 per cent. nickel, 15 per cent. silver, 30 per cent. zinc, 23 per cent. lead, 77 per cent. wool and 87 per cent. rubber. As you see England is a big economic organism which is still capable of competing. On



the other hand, the rôle of the United States is growing as the chief competitor against England on world markets, and the prospect of an armed conflict on this basis between capitalist England and the United States is most real.

Nevertheless, war against America will not save England from the difficulties with the help of which the masses are scared by the enemies of the proletarian revolution. England, first and foremost, has no oil of her own, and secondly it has no cotton and is almost entirely dependent for cotton upon the United States. True, the British Association of Cotton-Growers has of late carried out considerable work in connection with the growing of cotton in the Sudan, India and other colonies. All these difficulties connected with the question of raw materials,—will they not have to be faced by English capitalism during war time?

But the English revolution will solve these difficulties under an entirely different economic combination and in circumstances of entirely different inter-relationships between the States. Their solution will be very closely connected with the re-equipment and rationalisation of English industry in the new conditions of the world market.

The third question is the question of markets. Did the Communist Party give any answer to the English working class on this question? I think it did not. How do you think the broad masses of toilers can believe that the Communist Party will lead them to final victory?

The change in the entire economic structure of England as a result of the English revolution is closely connected with the problem of raising the purchasing power of India, China and other colonies. It is impossible, under capitalism, when the bourgeoisie throttles, exploits and robs the colonial masses, to create new markets; but the revolution will open up enormous opportunities in this direction. Therefore the solution to the question of markets lies on the road of national revolution in two large countries: India and China, which together represent approximately half the population of the world.

Finally the fourth question—that of the reconstruction of English industry and of rationalisation. I mentioned this when I criticised the Labour Party programme, and shall therefore not dwell on it again now.

To all these questions answers must be given. This must not be avoided if we are serious politicians who know where they are leading the working masses.

The way out of the crisis for England can be along capitalist or along revolutionary lines. We are the party which will save the English toiling masses from starvation and death. The way out of the crisis along capitalist lines is possible, according to the bourgeoisie, in two ways. One way, that dreamed of by British imperialism, is

to solve the rivalry between the U.S.A. and England by means of a new world war. It can be said in advance that England will be smashed in this war. And this would mean the capitalist destruction of England, the falling off of her colonies. This means that England will be reduced to the position of a second-rate Power. This will mean great trials for the English working class.

The second way out of the bourgeoisie is that depicted in the notorious book—the Denny pamphlet: by force of its natural economic and political advantages, America will economically conquer Britain without going into war. This is nonsense. But let us for a moment imagine this possible, then this would also be linked up with hard privation for the English working class. It is quite a different thing, the way out of which I spoke along the lines of proletarian revolution. We must show the English working class that the road of proletarian revolution is the only road which will save the toiling masses of England from the war and starvation which threatens them. The old state of affairs about which the English worker dreams because he is bound down by reformist illusions, will not return. If capitalism were to crawl out of the present crisis, it would be at the expense of renewed capital and new rationalisation; but this leads to shrunken markets. The worsened position of the working class brought about by English capitalism is merely the prelude to capitalist rationalisation. This new level will not only not remain, but will fall lower and lower. Therefore the only possibility is the other road, the revolutionary way.

The English Communist Party should show that in the new circumstances after the English revolution, social relations as regards the question of raw materials, markets, international division of labour, will be based upon a new combination of forces. The workers must be shown this new combination of forces: first and foremost the presence of the U.S.S.R.—one-sixth part of the world; the U.S.S.R. which will help the English proletariat to build up Socialism. No colonies or Dominions can take the place of this close fraternal solidarity between the Soviet proletariat and the English working class.

Secondly there is China and India. The day following the English revolution, just as the Five Year Plan grew up in the U.S.S.R., the problem would arise of industrialising these new young countries. This problem would fill up the years. This would be an enormous problem which would not only enliven English industry, but also the industries of other Socialist countries.

I would like to think that as a result of the work in our Commission this question will be raised before the Comintern and real help be given by us to the English Communist Party in solving this question.

# LESSONS OF THE ENGLISH ELECTIONS

(Speech of Comrade Kuusinen on the English Question.)

COMRADE POLLITT said at the beginning of his speech that after the elections someone at the Comintern had spoken of the British Communist Party with a certain amount of contempt. I think that this was a misunderstanding, a confusion; it is true that the bad election results of the Party were spoken of with a certain amount of contempt, but it is not true that the Communist Party was spoken of in this way. We all know that the British Communist Party, despite all the weaknesses and deficiencies from which it is suffering at present, is nevertheless the Party from which the leading Party of the British proletariat will develop, the Party which will lead the British working class to victory over the bourgeoisie. All our criticism with regard to the British Party—and with regard to all our other sections—is solely directed towards helping the Party by these mutual consultations to get clarity on the most important tasks confronting them.

Among the concrete questions which we must answer, there is no doubt that the foremost is the question of why we did not get more votes in the election. Comrade Pollitt was unable to give a definite or at least an exhaustive answer to this question. He invited us to take part in the discussion of this question on our side, and we must try to answer this question. But even more important for us is the question of what to do next. If we cannot give a clear answer to this question, then we should be in the same stupid position in which President Coolidge found himself during his election campaign. Coolidge was asked, "What should an honest man do when he is unemployed and cannot get work anywhere?" Coolidge answered: "God knows! But I don't."

If one were to give a very brief, though not a very profound, answer to the question why we got so few votes, I should say the following: it was because there were not more working-class electors in England who understood what is the object of getting Communists into Parliament. Out of about ten million working-class electors there were only 80,000, that is to say, no more than 0.8 per cent. who understood this matter. Why did not all the others understand it? Here I would distinguish between two kinds of causes, one fundamental cause and then the particular mistakes and deficiencies in our election campaign. Obviously, even if we had conducted our election campaign quite faultlessly and in the most excellent manner, we should not have got so many votes in England as the German Party (not even a tenth of their votes). In Great Britain

we still lack correct contact with the broad masses of workers. This was the *fundamental reason* of the failure of our Party in the General Election. I will not deal with this subject till the second part of my speech. But if our Party had properly conducted the election campaign in every respect we might have got twice as many votes as we did get. That was possible in the situation. We over here, and the British Party itself, expected we would get at least 100,000 votes, or 150,000 or 200,000; there were even some optimists who went further in their expectations. Was it really possible to get as many as 200,000 votes, or was this expectation, judged in the light of the objective situation, only an illusion? There is not one of us who would say, that taking the situation as it was it would not have been possible to get at least twice as many votes. If we had got these 200,000 votes, then we should have gained several seats in Parliament. We recruited about 3,000 new members, perhaps we could have got twice as many, and that would have been quite good. We should have then gained the necessary strong mobile forces for the further development of the Party and of the Communist movement as a whole. What happened then to the missing 80,000 or 100,000 votes. Why didn't these workers vote for us?

Then there is the further question of where the two million votes lost by the Labour Party have landed. MacDonald did not get them, nor did the Liberals, and nor did we Communists get them either. What happened to them? To judge from the election figures, these votes went to the Tories. But the British comrades find it very difficult to accept this explanation of the election figures; for in this case the question at once arises in their minds: what about the radicalisation of the working class if two million workers have even voted for the Conservatives? They tried to explain this fact by putting it down to abstentions; but the election figures give no reason for assuming that the number of abstentions, compared with previous elections, was so much larger. Moreover, abstentions are hardly the special method by which the radicalisation of the working class expresses itself! Was it essential that the radicalisation of the working class should inevitably have expressed itself in the election results? In my opinion it was not. It seems to me that in the result of the British elections on this occasion the radicalisation of the working class found very little expression.

But nevertheless this radicalisation is a fact.



If the radicalisation did not show itself in the election results, where did it show itself? First, in the great strike wave which we had in England; secondly, in the big and in many cases even very stormy unemployment movement and in the mass demonstrations which were bigger than they have been for a long time in England; thirdly, in the naval mutiny of Invergordon. That was no small matter! If we mention these three facts, then no reasonable person could deny that a great radicalisation is taking place in the British working class and at a much higher speed than formerly.

Comrade Heckert has already pointed out here that radicalisation, like world history itself, proceeds in a dialectical manner; it can take a zig-zag course; while one section of the workers is becoming rapidly radicalised, another section may at the same time be developing temporarily even towards the Right, or can be deceived by a bourgeois party to act against their interests by the election campaign. It would not be the first time in the history of parliamentarism, as the comrades know, that great masses of the workers have been misled during an election campaign. In the resolution of the Ninth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in 1928, when the new line of the British Party was laid down, it was said with regard to the radicalisation of the British workers that it proceeds "unevenly and with many zig-zags." Since that date the tempo of radicalisation has become much faster, but its irregular, zig-zag nature is still manifesting itself to-day.

The matter will become clearer to us if we consider more closely how the election campaign was conducted by the various classes and parties.

Take the election campaign of the British big bourgeoisie.

One can say what one likes about the British bourgeoisie, but one cannot deny that they know how to carry out political manoeuvres. They have proved this in recent years in a situation which has been by no means easy for them. The British bourgeoisie is the ruling class in the oldest capitalist country, where the great majority of the population consists of the proletariat and even of a well-organised proletariat. During this period (for several years already), while the famous "Prosperity" prevailed in the United States, a powerful wave of depression had already set in in England, but at the same time there had also begun a quite definite radicalisation of the British workers which showed itself most markedly in the general strike and in the great election victory of the Labour Party in 1929. After this great election victory of the Labour Party (in the election previous to this one), what did the British bourgeoisie do? The bourgeoisie repeated the manoeuvre with the Labour Govern-

ment which had already been carried out previously. What was the purpose of this manoeuvre? The purpose was to carry out the actual policy of the bourgeoisie through the instrumentality of the "workers' party"; especially the introduction of a great offensive against the working class through the Labour Government. Why was it better for the bourgeoisie to carry this out through a government of the Labour Party? (1) Because by this means the necessity of a capitalist offensive against the proletariat was demonstrated, since this offensive was even being carried out by the Labour Party. (2) Because this manoeuvre prevented the possibility of a big parliamentary increase for a Labour opposition, for the Labour Party was bound to be discredited in the eyes of a large number of workers if it carried out this policy as a government. At the same time the Conservatives were placed in a position which enabled them to appear as "saviours of the nation" at the coming elections, as the Party which was going to rescue the country from the miserable state to which the Labour Party had reduced it.

Did this political parliamentary manoeuvre succeed for the bourgeoisie and the Conservatives? Completely. The Conservative Party, the leading Party of the big bourgeoisie, has strengthened its parliamentary position immensely. The Labour Party was not merely pushed backwards in the parliamentary sphere (I am speaking here only of their parliamentary position), but was even split. The strength of the Tories has become stronger than before and has a broader basis. The election programme of the Conservatives, which was in fact a programme of unheard-of robbery of the great majority of the nation, was accepted by the majority of the electors as a programme of national salvation. Even a considerable section of the workers voted for it. There were the 600,000 who voted for MacDonald, and there were workers who voted Conservative.

Why should we dispute this fact. And indeed, it was not surprising that a section of the workers should have voted for the Conservatives when one remembers that these workers learned that even such authoritative "Labour leaders" as MacDonald, Thomas and Snowden were supporting the Conservatives. These people provided the evidence that this programme was the only programme of salvation for the nation. What did this programme promise to the workers? A good deal. It promised to put an end to the crisis and to put an end to unemployment. True, it did not propose an increase of unemployment benefit, but ostensibly it promised much *more* than that; namely, the abolition of unemployment itself. In such a situation it is not surprising

that sections of the workers were deceived, that many of the workers preferred even the Conservatives to MacDonald, and voted rather for the host than for his lackeys.

*What was the class line of the English big bourgeoisie?* It was as follows: In their opinion the whole crisis was a result of foreign competition and partly the result of the policy pursued by the external enemies of Great Britain; it was also a result of the revolutionary movement in the colonies, but above all, it was the result of the high standard of living of the British working class, high wages, cheap food prices, the social welfare system, etc. Basing themselves on this view the British big bourgeoisie developed a policy of (1) an aggressive economic struggle against foreign competition through Protectionism; (2) a belligerent foreign policy, especially against the Soviet Union; (3) the brutal suppression of the revolutionary movement in the colonies; and (4) a sharp lowering of the standard of living of the British working class.

The Labour Party said that the crisis had affected all classes. All classes, all sections of the people must make equal sacrifices. But that was not at all what the bourgeoisie intended. Not a penny from us was their line. Not a penny off our profits! On the contrary. The possibilities of the present moment must be exploited to make greater profits. And the financial oligarchy showed, partly also in the question of going off the gold standard, how well they were capable of manoeuvring against competitors in the international money market. Already before the elections the bourgeoisie could point out here and there factories, formerly closed down, which had now begun to work. There were not many of these examples, but nevertheless there were some and they were of a certain political importance in the election campaign. Even after the elections we can see that the British big bourgeoisie are still carrying out their manoeuvre; also in the political sphere. Even to-day the head of the national government is formally not Baldwin but MacDonald; the bourgeoisie still wants to make some political profit out of his name.

*Take the Election Campaign of the Labour Party.*

We should first of all put the question, How was it that the Labour Party succeeded in getting six million votes? That the Labour Party lost votes seems to me much easier to understand than the fact that it polled so many votes.

What was the line of the Labour Party? Its line was this: the economic crisis in England has arisen from international causes, even if it was directly sharpened partly by American and partly by English bankers, in the main it was an inter-

national misfortune from which all classes of the people are suffering; therefore, it is necessary that in this time of crisis all classes should make sacrifices in order that the crisis may be overcome as painlessly as possible. Thus the Labour Party declared its willingness to help to transfer part of the crisis burdens to the working class, i.e., to support the class policy of the big bourgeoisie.

How did the Labour Party succeed in getting six million votes with such a programme? Had this programme anything in it to attract six million workers? It is impossible to understand this if one disregards the fact that in the conduct of the election campaign by the Labour Party there was a considerable element of left demagoguery.

In the first place, the Labour Party entered the lists in this election as the chief opponent of the main party of the bourgeoisie, the Conservatives, as the only opposition party which had any real chance of delivering a parliamentary blow against the Conservatives. In the second place the Labour Party just before the elections had resigned from the Government. On what question had it resigned? On the question of unemployment benefit. Apparently the Labour Party was no longer agreed with the programme of the capitalist offensive against the proletariat. Most of the workers knew well enough that the Labour Party when it formed the Labour Government introduced this very policy, but now it seemed to the workers as if things had come to such a pass that the Labour Party was no longer ready to co-operate in this attack. How did the Labour Party break with the former government policy? It managed this in rather a sensational way! A breach with MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas—with the old, recognised, traditional leaders of the Labour Party! Was not this well adapted to deceive the workers? These people were showing now that in order to defend the workers' unemployment benefit they were even ready to break with MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas. The Labour Party adopted during the election campaign a fairly radical tone against the leaders of finance capital, against the "conspiracy of the bankers." Throughout the election campaign speeches were made against the bankers' ramp, and this was not done as at first merely against the American bankers, but an attack was made during the election campaign on the British bankers, too. The demand for nationalisation and State control of the credit system was put forward—under the name of "socialism." So long as the crisis continued, the Labour Party would help the workers to weather the crisis by means of the "lesser evil."



When one takes these facts into consideration then it is not so surprising that great masses of the workers supposed during the election campaign that the Labour Party would represent their interests. This illusion was increased by the fact that Snowden and the entire bourgeoisie spoke of the Labour Party programme throughout the election campaign as Bolshevik! They fought less against us, but put forward the Labour Party as the representative of the idea of Bolshevism. This, too, enabled the Labour Party to gain a certain authority in the eyes of the more advanced workers.

Is it possible to say now after the election defeat of the Labour Party that this Party is entirely bankrupt, and that (as some English comrades have written and stated) its rôle is played out? I do not think so. *We are faced with the very serious and important task of exposing the Labour Party.* I have been told that throughout the entire election campaign the "Daily Worker" did not publish a single special article on the programme of the Labour Party. Perhaps this was wrong, perhaps there was an article on this subject which could not be found, but in any case there is so little on this subject that it is hard to find it, and this is a serious sin of omission.

#### THE "LEFT" I.L.P.-ERS.

What I have said hitherto with regard to the demagoguery of the Labour Party refers to the official demagoguery of the Labour Party. But in addition to this we had the "Left" I.L.P. people in the arena—Maxton and others. They were, of course, still more radical than the Right Labour Party people. What was really their slogan? They declared at mass meetings that they agreed with the demands of the Communist Party.

When the bourgeoisie accused the leaders of the Labour Party of Bolshevism, the Right Labour men denied this indignantly and proved that in the year 1918-19 it was *they*, themselves, who had saved capitalism in England just as Ebert saved it in Germany; but the "left" Labour men, so far as their speeches were concerned, were anxious to prove that they "agreed" with the demands of the Communists.

In London, Brown, a Labour Party member, appeared at election meetings and supported our election programme, so that the audience could not make out what was the difference between Brown and the Communists. True, this only occurred in the first period of the election campaign. Later on he was smart enough to speak against our election programme and to come out in support of the Labour Party programme. But the trick had already worked. Another candi-

date, *MacGovern*, agreed with the programme of our Party and even took part in the demonstrations and was arrested. It seems that our comrades were unable to disassociate themselves politically from him. This MacGovern is now a member of Parliament. The case of *Strachey* in Birmingham I do not know very exactly. He stood as an independent Labour candidate, but I cannot say whether he has really and definitely broken with the Labour Party. But as long as we do not know this, we must be distrustful of him. Maxton did not speak against our programme. In Glasgow I believe he supported our programme. Various questions were put to him in order to catch him. He never gave a direct answer to these questions, but several times declared that he agreed with our demands in general. Nobody can say that we succeeded in exposing the "left" I.L.P.-ers during the election campaign. Yet that was the chief task of the Communists.

"Without destroying opportunism in the Labour movement it is impossible to destroy the capitalist system." This was emphasised by the E.C.C.I. after the General Strike in 1926, and the necessity of ruthless exposure of Right traitors, as well as "left" capitulators was pointed out. In the Open Letter of 1928 this was once more emphasised:

"We need now the sharpest and clearest exposure of all reformist tricks, especially when they masquerade under 'left' phraseology, and also of all opportunistic mistakes, especially when they are made by real fighters who have a large following."

We have got thousands of resolutions on this subject, but how little has been done for the real exposure of the I.L.P.-ers before the masses. The "Lefts" were often allowed to speak on our platforms without opposition. And they were able to exploit this rotten liberalism of our comrades by appearing before the mass of the workers with the same programme as the Communists. What impression must that have made upon the masses of the workers? "These people are, of course, not so revolutionary as the Communists, but, after all, the question at present is not the revolution, but the elections; it is therefore best to elect the I.L.P. candidates, who have as good an election programme as the Communist and are moreover experienced parliamentarians." Thus, even from the narrow viewpoint of electoral success it was harmful not to dissociate ourselves from the "left" I.L.P.-ers.

I have been told that in London there was a woman candidate of the Labour Party who played a special part in our meetings. She answered all the questions of our comrades in the affirmative.

and explained pathetically that if she were once returned to Parliament the unemployment benefit of the workers would only be taken away over her corpse. She gained great applause. Our comrades were not in a position to expose her. At the same time the unemployment benefit was actually reduced; perhaps across the political corpse of this lady?

Many of our comrades simply did not know how to act in this case. You have surely not forgotten the long list of crimes of the Labour Party? Why didn't you at least nail some of their crimes to the post and demand of the candidates that they should publicly *condemn* them? Every one of us knows a whole number of unparalleled betrayals of the Labour Party. One had only to begin with the betrayal of the general strike and continue to the end of the term of office of the second Labour Government, in order to demand of the Labour candidates who declared they they agreed with our programme an open condemnation of these concrete betrayals committed by the Labour Party. If they had refused to agree to such a condemnation then we had an effective argument to take to the workers, and we could say to them: "Now you see that in this concrete question this candidate will not condemn the obvious treachery of the Labour Party but gloss it over." If they had agreed to the condemnation the workers would have had something at least to think about. They would have said to themselves: "The Labour Party has done such rascally things that even their own candidate is forced to condemn it, and if all the other I.L.P. members of Parliament have betrayed the workers' interests, where are the guarantees that this candidate, too, will not betray them?" That would have been the beginning of the exposure of the I.L.P., not, of course, the whole exposure, but a beginning.

#### THE LINE OF THE PROLETARIAT.

In order to go more deeply into the exposure of the I.L.P. and the Labour members, one would have to lay before the workers with absolute clarity what the *line of the proletariat* in this phase of the class struggle ought to be. For example, one could explain it in this way:

The crisis arises from capitalism, that is to say, from the capitalists—it is true that the capitalists of all countries have caused it, but *especially* it is due to the British capitalists and particularly to the *big* capitalists, the chief representatives of finance capital. Further, it is a lie that all sections of the population are suffering equally under the present crisis. A section of the capitalists is not only not suffering at all, but is actually enriching itself by the present crisis. A

way out of this crisis and back again to the condition of capitalism such as existed before the war cannot be found (this we should have told the workers quite plainly). But the capitalists themselves do not want to find a way out of this kind. They want to make the crisis for the working class, the need of the working class, permanent, but for themselves they want to ensure still bigger profits than they had formerly. They are carrying out a general offensive against our class, and that is why we must defend ourselves. Not a penny from *us*—that is our demand, for which we will fight. Let the big capitalists content themselves with less profits! We must make a common fight against the offensive of the capitalists, for the revolutionary way out of the crisis. The election manifesto of the Communist Party was composed more or less on this line as far as I can judge by the translation at my disposal. It seems to me that this is a perfectly correct line. But in actual practice during the election campaign this line lacked flesh and blood. The main facts were made comprehensible enough to the broad masses, that it was a question of a general offensive of capitalism against the working class, that the crisis has also a class character, and that for the working class it is quite a different crisis than for the capitalists, that the crisis for the workers is above all an offensive of the capitalists; wage robbery, increased rents, higher food prices, etc. Only if one makes these facts absolutely clear to the workers is it possible also to make it clear to them that we must now build up a proletarian united front for struggle against the capitalist offensive.

To put the question whether in our fight we should have directed our attack more against the Conservatives or more against the Labour Party seems to me incorrect. Within the working class it was obviously the Labour Party, together with the I.L.P., which was the Party we had to fight against and expose, though, of course, in the class struggle the main enemy is the bourgeoisie. What was the rôle of the Labour Party in this class struggle? As a matter of fact the Labour Party itself spoke quite openly of the rôle for which it was cast: it was a *bulwark*. The deception carried out by the Labour Party was in representing itself as a bulwark between reaction and revolution. Whereas actually it was a bulwark within the very fortress of capitalist reaction. The Labour Party constituted no hindrance to wage robbery, to the rise in food prices, etc., in fact the Labour Government introduced them, but in the struggle against the resistance of the working class the Labour Party acted in every strike as a bulwark of the bourgeoisie. And it fulfilled this part most of all during the elections by pre-



venting the workers from rallying around the Communist Party. There was in England during the elections a whole extra system of bulwarks. The "National" Labour Party was also a bulwark, the T.U.C. and the official Labour Party were bulwarks, as well as the I.L.P. But every one of these bulwarks was directed *against the left*. This multiple system of bulwarks shows what a fine art of political fortification the British bourgeoisie has developed.

#### MISTAKES IN PRESENTING THE CRISIS ISSUE.

On our side we had the task of showing the proletariat the way out of the crisis in a thoroughly popular and comprehensible way. But we went in partially for philosophical talk, for a certain kind of philosophy of crisis. You remember what Marx said: philosophers interpret the world, but we have to *change* the world. What some of our comrades have written and said about the crisis was mere interpretation of the crisis and even a revolutionary very left and very sympathetic interpretation, but without political conclusions, and without representing matters from the point of view of practical revolutionary policy. For example, the economic crisis has been represented as one international phenomenon without, for instance, asking the question: who is responsible for the crisis? Politics is a struggle on the basis of the class struggle. In politics there is always someone or several people who are to blame. The Conservatives said that the workers are to blame who resist wage or unemployment benefit reductions, and from this viewpoint they fought against even the programme of the Labour Party as a "Bolshevist" programme. Our comrades said that the capitalist system in general is to blame for the crisis!—that is theory, but not politics! When the "crisis" is represented in the articles of our comrades as a *deus ex machina* who does everything and allegedly explains everything, this unwillingly provides a political excuse for the class enemy and that could only aid the reformists in hindering the mobilisation of the masses against the capitalist offensive.

With regard to the question of the crisis there have been right and left mistakes. The right mistakes, which are easier to recognise, consist in advocating and supporting the overcoming of the crisis on capitalist lines. The "left" mistakes are expressed in the following form: there is no way out at all for the bourgeoisie, already the "depreciation of the pound sterling has dealt British capitalism a deadly blow" ("D.W.," 25-10-31). "The economic crisis itself leads to the economic collapse of capitalism, and our task is to intensify the crisis." Moreover, someone has been even foolish enough to exclaim

after the announcement of the election results: "Let them starve!" "Let the people go on starving," as if the workers have not starved enough, and *therefore* they did not vote for us. This is a dangerous "left" deviation, which must be decisively rejected. Or do you believe, comrades, that we can go before the broad working masses in England, or in any other capitalist country, and make ourselves understood if we declare to this mass of workers: fight for the intensification of the crisis, that is our slogan. No, that is not our slogan. We can analyse the situation and show that the crisis is always sharpening and show how the revolutionary crisis is maturing. But we cannot bring forward the slogan of "Sharpen the crisis."

Our comrades often display an almost childish pleasure when they hear that there has been a bank failure somewhere or other. I must admit that I also take malicious pleasure in the news of a bank crash. But when this is represented as if it were somehow a success for our Communist work, and especially when these events are so overestimated as to be treated, even though unconsciously, as an excuse for our passivity, then one must say that they should not be treated in this manner. A certain emphasis which is very often made in articles in the "Daily Worker" on the powerlessness of the bourgeoisie to find a way out of the crisis, shows that this is not quite accidental; it is a sort of definite self-consolation that what we are not in a position to bring about is being done by the bankers who are driving each other into bankruptcy. Even the articles of Comrade Rust are not free from such tendencies. But even worse things happen, as, for instance, in the last number of the "Daily Worker" (12-12-31), where the decision of a shipbuilding company to suspend the construction of a new ship is described in the following pathetic manner:

"The decision to suspend the building of the giant Cunarder has caused a *world-wide sensation*. Thousands of men have been thrown out of work on the eve of Christmas, the Cunard line complains about its losses, and British shipowners have lost prestige and have been deprived of any opportunity of winning the 'blue ribbon' of the Atlantic.

"But it is not these things that make the sensation. A few thousand extra unemployed is a small addition to figures, which already approach nearly three millions: the wails of the Cunard Company make but dry reading after the Kysant scandal, and the British capitalists have already lost many 'blue ribbons.'

"*The Cunard situation is the sudden revelation of the shaky condition of the entire credit system of British imperialism.*"

Comrades, this is a caricature. If we overestimate facts like these to such a degree and then compare with this exaggeration our underestimation of the crisis in the navy, this is definitely bad. Comrade Pollitt denied that there had been an underestimation in relation to the events at Invergordon. But it is certainly a fact that the "Daily Worker" has used no such emotional tone in relation to them as is here used in relation to the Cunard liner which is a comparatively insignificant fact.

#### CORRECT STRUGGLE FOR PARTIAL DEMANDS AND FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS.

The aforesaid question is linked up with the question of the fight for partial demands. When we speak not only of the election campaign, but of the whole policy of the C.P.G.B. in putting forward partial demands in strikes, etc., numerous cases of mistakes can be established. We have cases where partial demands were put forward in isolation from the fundamental revolutionary demands. But on the other hand, there are also cases of left deviations in which it is suggested that the fight for partial demands has no object, that it is impossible to get material results from the strike or other mass struggle, or that if it is possible, it is even harmful. That is not Leninism. The Leninist line is to treat the fight for partial demands as the starting point for the revolutionising of the class struggle. But it must be a serious fight for partial demands. There must be no playing about with the partial demands. Whether in such a struggle it is possible to achieve material results, is a different question. Experience has shown that even in the present period it is possible to attain certain material results as by-products of the political struggle, provided that the partial struggle has been well prepared and correctly conducted. But if we do not earnestly struggle for our demands, we shall not attain either material or political results.

In the election campaign a certain anti-parliamentarian tendency showed itself among a section of the comrades. The Party had brought forward as a programme of action—the demand, "not a penny off." But perhaps some comrades doubted whether it was possible to prevent either by parliamentary or extra-parliamentary struggle the predatory campaign of the bourgeoisie and whether one really should seriously suggest to the workers that it was worth fighting for these partial demands. But, comrades, when on the one hand the Communists laid such stress on the fact that there was no capitalist way out of the crisis and then did not show in a comprehensible manner the revolutionary way out, when on the one hand

they so exaggerated the plight of the capitalist enterprises that it seemed as if the capitalists were absolutely compelled to go on with their offensive against the working class, and on the other hand advocated a struggle for our partial demands without conviction, it must have seemed to many workers that the Labourites were better defenders of the workers' interests than the Communists. They promised the workers at least to secure the "lesser evil" through the parliament, and the workers did not know that this was a fraud in order to enforce the greater evil. The Communists, however, were unable to tell the workers in a convincing manner what they have to do in their plight *now*, when a revolutionary situation does not yet exist. "Is it worth while to put up a serious parliamentary and extra-parliamentary fight to resist the employers and government offensive?" "Is it possible to achieve hereby a direct result?" The Communists should have answered, "It is possible; it is not *certain*, but it is possible provided the struggle for our partial demands is taken up energetically and large masses of workers participate in it." If we represent struggles for partial demands as hopeless, how can we call on the workers to take them up? The worker will not go on strike for the sake of a strike, it is not a case of "art for art's sake." But he takes the struggle for partial demands seriously, and the Communists must take this fight as seriously. But if a worker had asked us during the election campaign whether the fulfilment of our partial demands would not intensify the crisis then we should have answered: "For us, the working class, things will be easier, provided that hundreds of thousands of workers take up a determined class struggle with united forces, as we propose it."

The inner misgivings of some of our comrades with regard to this matter are due to fear of being side-tracked from the revolutionary line, hereby tumbling into the position of the reformists. They, firstly, overlook the fact that the reformists do not want to fight even for the smallest reforms, not even for the "lesser evil." They certainly *pay lip-service* to the "lesser evil," in order to prevent the workers' defensive struggle and enable the bourgeoisie to put across the *greater evil*. They advocate compromises with the employers, to *demobilise* the fighting forces of the workers, in order to hinder strikes or to smash them.

Fundamentally this was the standpoint of all the Labourites in the elections.

It seems to me important to emphasise this because there was lack of clarity regarding this point even in Comrade Heckert's remarks at the



R.I.L.U. Plenum which called forth criticism on my part. For if, on the one hand, we represent partial demands to the workers as if they were a hopeless affair, as if it were impossible to gain anything hereby, but, on the other hand, say that the workers are nevertheless obliged to fight, then the workers will probably answer us: we are not obliged to fight without a practical purpose! We do not want a senseless struggle. Neither do we Communists want a senseless struggle, and we must therefore explain correctly to the workers the meaning of partial struggles. We must say: It is possible only by means of independent determined mass struggle to gain material results; but often — especially in this period—it is very difficult, through a single strike, or even a single parliamentary contest, to gain the smallest improvements from the bourgeoisie. But if as a class we do not defend ourselves against the offensive of the bourgeoisie, if we do not fight at all, then we shall be all the more ruthlessly defeated and enslaved. On the other hand, a determined class struggle for the defence of our daily interests strengthens our class front even if we do not attain direct material results through a single partial struggle, and enhances the prospect of victory in the coming great revolutionary struggles of our class. This idea was actually expressed in the election address of the C.P.G.B., which even in its title indicated the "*way out for the working class*." Only this idea should have been shown more clearly, intelligibly, and concretely in the election campaign, which, unfortunately, was not done.

If I have emphasised the fact that the fight for partial demands must be seriously conducted, I must at once add the point that the fight must be conducted for correct partial demands, not for opportunistic demands. Communists cannot, for instance, bring forward demands (and they have actually appeared in the Communist press) which might lead to the bolstering up of British capitalism. That sort of thing must be put an end to. In the "*Daily Worker*," for instance, the policy of British imperialism has been criticised during the election campaign from the standpoint of expansion of the external markets of British imperialism. The demand was put forward for the improvement of the social and economic position of the inhabitants of the British colonies because "this would ensure an unlimited market to British industry." On December 8th, 1931, the "*Daily Worker*" even said with regard to the reparations question: "If the British capitalists do not carry their policy against France, then they will be confronted with a catastrophe." This was a gross opportunistic lapse.

I do not know if another question has been

raised in England, which, however, should be raised in this connection: whether it would have been possible during the election campaign to include in our election platform positive partial demands such as, for example, credits to the Soviet Union, or the demand of the "left" Labourites—nationalisation of the banks by parliamentary methods. This does not seem to me to be correct. We should not commit ourselves along the road of positive demands which tend to improve the position of British imperialism. All the partial demands which appeared in the election manifesto of the British Party were of a different, a correct character: they were workers' demands for the defence of the working class against the capitalist offensive and partly also demands directed towards a counter-offensive against the big bourgeoisie. I think that if one does not carefully maintain in the present period this character of the partial demands it would be very difficult for us to differentiate ourselves politically from the "left" reformists who bring forward various constructive programmes to reform capitalism.

This must be very carefully kept in view, above all in England, because we must approach the British workers with particularly concrete and practical partial demands. We should have told the English workers clearly and concretely both during the election campaign and in every other campaign what the practical steps are which we propose to them—now in the present time and not only after the revolution. We must then not permit an anti-parliamentary tone, nor must we fall into a markedly reformist parliamentarism, but must strike the note of *revolutionary parliamentarism*. I recommend the English comrades to open once more Lenin's book on "Infantile Diseases of 'Left-Wing' Communism," where Lenin dealt with England especially on the methods of revolutionary parliamentarism. The revolutionary way out which we have to show consists above all in the development of the revolutionary mass movement, in linking up the Communist fight, both inside and outside parliament, with the strike struggles, demonstrations, etc., and in revolutionising and developing these struggles up to the political strike and to revolutionary insurrection. This is the line of the movement which we should have clearly shown to the workers during the election campaign.

But the Party should have, at the same time, tried to bring home to the workers what revolution will mean in England, what it will look like, and what great *new problems* are in store for us in this connection. This is a special problem by itself, it is a very important problem, above all, for our revolutionary propaganda, which we have

got to deepen and make concrete in England. I have not yet worked out this problem, but Comrade Manuilsky has promised to deal with it here. My task has been chiefly to examine the practical work of our Party in the light of the lessons of the election campaign.

#### MISTAKES IN THE LEADERSHIP OF DEMONSTRATIONS.

Not only tens, but hundreds of thousands of workers listened to us and participated in our meetings and demonstrations, but we were not able to explain to them clearly what the Communists stood for. I have already stated that the fundamental reasons for the want of success of the Communists were not the particular mistakes or deficiencies of the election campaign. They lay in the lack of a correct contact with the masses. The Party had a certain contact with the masses in the great demonstrations. This cannot be denied. But we cannot say that we were able to lead these demonstrations correctly. Comrade Kerrigan has described here the mistakes which were made in Glasgow, but it seems to me that Comrade Kerrigan tended rather to belittle the mistakes. That should not be done. The matter is much too important.

What was the nature of this mistake in Glasgow? The mistake was as follows: There are two kinds of demonstrations. On the one hand, there is the kind that they hold in Sweden on the 1st of May, so long as it does not rain. (Interruption: "Comrade Kuusinen, do not insult the present Swedish Party, at that time it was the renegades who were at the helm!"). Quite so. This type of May 1st demonstration is a holiday demonstration, the police are present, but only in order to help us maintain order. The other kind of demonstration is the sort that the authorities are not particularly fond of, which is carried out without their permission and perhaps even without an application for their permission. The demonstration goes on to the streets in order to claim its right to the streets. Thus we have here a totally different kind of demonstration. The question here is as to the character of the demonstration in Glasgow. Among the mass of the workers there was a great demand for the right to the streets. The Glasgow workers wanted to claim their right to the streets, and wanted to raise the issue of the streets; whether the streets only belonged to the police or to the revolutionary proletariat which goes on to the streets in order to press for its demands. In Glasgow and also in various other towns, the workers as a result of past experiences, had realised the necessity of arming themselves with sticks and stones. The city magistrates, as the official representative of the Glasgow bourgeoisie,

were naturally opposed to such a demonstration. They were not opposed to all demonstrations in general, but to demonstrations of this kind. The magistrates were faced with a rather difficult question, the question, how can we prevent such a demonstration from taking place? And it was at this very critical moment that our comrades came to the magistrates in order to negotiate with them. And they negotiated on the question through which particular streets the demonstration could proceed. On this question naturally it was very easy to come to an agreement. But the critical question was whether the workers were to be forbidden to carry any sort of weapon, to have any sticks or stones with them. And our comrades said to themselves: We certainly will not make difficulties about such a small matter, we will give in to the police. But who was to tell the workers that they were not to carry sticks or stones? Our comrades even took this task upon themselves. And an announcement at once appeared in the capitalist press that the Communists and the police had come to an agreement that it would be a perfectly peaceful demonstration.

This was the mistake. At that moment, when the British workers were holding their first semi-revolutionary demonstration, to ask the Glasgow workers to demonstrate without weapons, was a political mistake. The comrades say that their object in taking this step was to get great masses to the demonstrations. That was an erroneous "mass policy," for in doing so they deprived the demonstration of any revolutionary character. Up to the moment of the agreement the demonstration was a bugbear in the eyes of the entire bourgeoisie, but after the agreement it became merely a quite harmless affair. Even on the eve of the demonstration the Glasgow magistrates could say: "The Communists are trying to bring all the wild people from the working-class districts on to the streets!" But as soon as the agreement had been come to with the Communists the magistrates and other gentry might very well have said to their children: "Go into the streets and you will see a very interesting demonstration there!" An agreement had been come to, so to speak, with the lion-tamer that he should parade the lion in a cage through the streets.

What would the Glasgow comrades have said if similar tactics had been recommended to the sailors at Invergordon? When the sailors at the beginning of the mutiny were only ready to strike on one ship, the Glasgow Communists would, we suppose, have come to them and said: See, you ought to make an agreement with the magistrate, and then you will be able to get all the sailors



out, or at least great masses of them, and that will be a fine strike!

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the British Party intervened in this matter and condemned this mistake. This was necessary and correct. It is true that on this occasion certain young comrades found the magnificent phrase that this was a case of an "objectively counter-revolutionary action!" This is a phrase which was rather a mouthful for anyone. These comrades had not carefully read the resolutions of the Young Communist International (laughter), or they would have remembered a resolution which was adopted at the last session but one of the Enlarged Presidium of the Y.C.I., and in which certain comrades in the ranks of the Y.C.I. were quite rudely referred to as "left-shouters." On the other hand, I must say: if the Party leadership had not intervened in this matter and had not clearly condemned it, then we should have been obliged to say here that the change in the line of the Party which was decided upon in 1928 had not been carried out.

But now we can say that such a statement would be a libel on the Party. The change in the line which was decided upon in 1928 by the British delegation and the E.C.C.I. is being *introduced* in England. In one respect this line has also been accepted by the Party cadres, namely, the fight against right opportunist illusions. We have seen many opportunistic lapses in England, including those made in the election campaign, but these were exceptions, they were not the line of the Party.

#### THE TURN TOWARDS BOLSHEVIK MASS WORK.

But the other aspect of the line which was laid down in 1928 has not, in my opinion, been carried out by the British Party, and in fact, very little has been done to introduce it, and that is *Bolshevik mass work*. The change in the line which was decided upon in 1928 did not by any means signify merely a fight against right opportunism, but it meant also the introduction of Bolshevik mass work. And here lies the great weakness of the Party. I cannot agree with the statement that the Party has already in the most recent period come closer or better to grips with the task of conquering the majority of the working class in England. Unfortunately this is not yet the

case. In this respect a very great change must be made in the work of the Party. I shall speak of this more in detail later. What did Lenin say in the year 1920?

"To be able to find, to sense, to determine the concrete plan of still incomplete revolutionary methods and measures, leading the masses to the real, decisive, final, great revolutionary struggle—this is the chief problem of modern Communism in Western Europe and America" ("Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder," page 76).

If the English comrades would want me to give them immediately a brief answer as to what is now, in my opinion, the most important thing to be done in England, I would answer: You in England must try with all your energy and in a very concrete manner to take up at once the *preparation of strike struggles*. That, in my opinion, is once again the right link in the chain, the *central task* of the Party. But not in any narrow sense; what I am referring to when I speak of the preparation of strike movements is our whole work in the factories and trade unions.

I have not here analysed the present economic situation in England. Perhaps we shall reach this point in the Polit-Secretariat. But what is, in this connection, the object in general of our analysis of the objective situation? Not simply stating that so and so much iron and steel, etc., has been produced; what we want to get at is the objective framework for the coming class struggles; we want to foresee in what particular forms the *mass movement* in England will develop in the near future. For we cannot determine simply according to our own subjective wishes what these struggles and the mass movement will be and in what forms they will appear, though we ourselves are *also* an important factor in this respect. In Germany we can do that more easily because there we are stronger and in closer contact with the masses. But one thing is clear to all of us, and that is, the kind of mass movement which is *quite certain* to take place in England in 1932, namely, strike struggles! There is no doubt whatever of this. The only question is what part the Party will play in these mass struggles and in their preparation in the factories and trade unions.

# SECOND INTERNATIONAL AND THE WAR IN CHINA

## I.

THE question of the struggle against war is a question of life and death for the international working class. War jeopardises not only the material but also the ideological achievements of the international proletariat, and in the present epoch of two conflicting worlds it jeopardises in particular all the gigantic successes which have been attained by socialist construction in the Soviet Union, nay, more, it jeopardises the very lives and existences of millions of workers. It is not only that the proletariat has to make all the sacrifices and bear all the burdens of war, it is also upon the shoulders of the proletariat that the issue and the consequences of all imperialist wars rest.

The question of war revealed the treachery of the Second International with especial clarity. The collapse of the Second International was expressed not only in its organisational break-up but above all in its ideological bankruptcy, in the complete triumph of opportunism. At the decisive moment the international decisions by which the executive of the international and all its groups were bound not only to fight against war but also to undertake direct action in war time, became so much waste paper. In August, 1914, the International split up into so many hostile warring groups. Under the slogan of defending their respective fatherlands the leaders of the International — Vandervelde, Blum, Renaudel, Ebert, Scheidemann, Henderson and Co.—went over into the camp of the imperialist war lords, “placed themselves on the side of their general staff, their government and their bourgeoisie against the proletariat” (Lenin). It was the triumph of social chauvinism.

Just as the Party leaders of the Second International supported the imperialist world war from the standpoint of their own bourgeoisie, so did they also give their sanction to the predatory peace treaty of Versailles which laid intolerable burdens on the proletariat of the vanquished countries, and assisted the bourgeoisie of those vanquished countries to throttle the proletarian revolution in the blood of tens of thousands of revolutionary workers.

The same spirit of social chauvinism and social imperialism which led to the collapse of the pre-war International in August, 1914, also dominated the post-war Second International which was founded anew in Hamburg in 1923. Its leaders were the same men who had conducted the business of the bourgeoisie of their respective countries during the imperialist world war, had risen

to be Cabinet Ministers invested with the highest honours bestowed by the imperialist bourgeoisie. Under their leadership the Second International, true to its war traditions, has now developed into an instrument of world imperialism in the struggle against the world proletariat and against the Soviet Union, the struggle of world imperialism to find a way out of the world economic crisis, i.e., to start a new imperialist world war.

## II.

The war which Japanese imperialism is waging in Manchuria and in the Yangtse Valley against the Chinese workers and peasants is an out-and-out robber imperialist war alike in its character and its aims. It is a war whose object is to partition China, a war which combines in itself all the elements of a new imperialist world war, a war which must be regarded as the prelude to a war of intervention against the Soviet Union. It is no longer necessary to prove this. The capitalist press day by day confirms the imperialist character of this war by its open and unequivocal references to the fact that this war is the first step towards overcoming the world economic crisis, in other words, that it is the imperialist way out of the crisis. The cynicism with which the imperialists regard the question of war to-day is almost unsurpassable. The “North American Review,” for example, writes as follows:—

“Every country will the more easily alleviate its position by means of a new war, the longer and the bloodier it is in comparison with the last war. If we try to find a practical way of bringing back good times, there is only one means left: We need a new war which will last longer, kill more men and cost us dearer than the last, otherwise we will revert to cannibalism.”\*

This open and shameless language clearly reveals the true face of imperialism. They need a new war. They want a war against the country which is creating the requisite conditions for making all war impossible. What they want first and foremost is to destroy the Soviet Union, the strongest bulwark of the proletarian revolution in an otherwise capitalist world. They are fighting to uphold the capitalist economic system of robbery and oppression and all means are fair means for them in this struggle.

A German army paper, examining the present situation from the “military” point of view, arrives at the conclusion that the new world war has already begun. It writes as follows:

“While Europe cannot take its eyes from its

\* All quotations re-translated.



own trouble, a new world war has already blazed up in the Pacific Ocean—a war whose consequences will be hardly less momentous than those of the late world war whose echoes are not yet silenced.”

What is international social democracy doing? Its press tried first of all to misrepresent the robber war of Japanese imperialism as a *colonial war*. According to the way in which the social democratic press presents it, the acts of provocation committed by Japanese imperialists in close connection with the war in China, against the Soviet Union, represent nothing more than the “contradictions between two imperialist powers” who are fighting for colonial possessions, the colonial possession being this case Manchuria. For example, an article entitled “The Shadow of Russia,” reprinted in the entire social democratic press of Germany, puts it as follows:

“Considering the state of mind which prevails also on the Soviet side, the probability of a set-to between Russia and Japan for the possession of China is coming more and more within the range of possibility.”

According to their way of representing the facts, both the Soviet Union and Japan are trying to win “China as a market and a source of raw materials” and to subject it to their “imperialist aims.” The sense of the misrepresentation is clear and unequivocal. *International social democracy is already seeing to it to-day that in case of a war of intervention against the Soviet Union, the latter shall itself be the “guilty party,” hoping in this way to be able to mobilise the working class “in the name of freedom and democracy” for the struggle against the Soviet Union and for the support of the robber plans of world imperialism.*

While international social democracy is conducting this new campaign of agitation against “Soviet Imperialism” as an ideological preparation for the imperialist “crusade” against the Soviet Union, it simultaneously issues a “peace manifesto” against the war in China. True, the leaders of the Second International required a space of some months to collect their forces for this “deed.” The result is a *hypocritical social-imperialist manoeuvre* which has a double object in view: on the one hand it is intended to deceive the working class as to the real character of the war in China and on the other hand the Second International thereby registers its readiness to assist the European imperialist powers in securing their “well-won rights” in China.

Let us examine what the leaders of the Second International have to say to the international proletariat in the *present situation when the re-*

*partition of the world by the imperialists, or in other words the war and the most immediate preparations for intervention, are just beginning:* what “expedient means” do they propose for the struggle against war?

### III.

The bureau of the executive of the Second International appeals to the “workers of all countries” with a “manifesto against Japan.” This appeal bears the date of February 26th. It begins with the declaration that “Japan’s attack on China in Eastern Asia has let loose the fury of war,” that “Manchuria has been occupied by Japanese troops” and that “an autonomous republic is to become a marionette in the hands of Japanese imperialism,” that, “bloody fighting is raging in the streets of the mighty city of Shanghai.” After thus portraying the situation in China the appeal deals with the attitude of the great powers to the war in China: “During Japan’s advance in Manchuria, the great powers have done nothing to prevent the violation of treaties signed by Japan or to compel the Japanese robbers to evacuate the Chinese soil which they have wrongfully occupied.”

This indictment of the Second International directed against the great imperialist powers, is really a consummate indictment of the Second International itself. It is no accident that the Second International also failed to say a single word against the predatory attack of Japanese imperialism on Manchuria. Nor is it an accident that in this situation the social democratic press has again resorted to the slanderous catchword of “Soviet imperialism” and intensified its campaign of agitation against the Soviet Union at that very time when Japanese imperialism was redoubling its acts of provocation against the Soviet Union.

The appeal continues: “The bombardment of Shanghai and Nanking has at least roused the capitalist governments. But even now, when they are trembling for their own privileges in China, they do not dare to employ effective *means of action*. Instead they still continue to supply munitions to Japan and permit Japanese delegates to deliver lying pacifist speeches at the disarmament conference.”

If we compare the attitude of the Second International itself with this indictment against the capitalist governments, we are forced to the conclusion, *firstly*, that the Second International was “roused against the war in China” even later than those governments—we will discuss later the question of *how* the Second International was roused against the war in China; *secondly* that the Second International dares to employ “effec-

tive means of action" against the war just as little as the imperialist governments, and *thirdly* that the supplying of munitions by imperialist powers is going on under the protection of social democratic ministers and police chiefs! And finally what difference is there between the "lying pacifist speeches" of the Japanese delegates and those delivered in Geneva by Messrs. Vandervelde, Henderson and Jouhaux? We see that every sentence of the indictment against the capitalist governments recoils with yet greater force upon the head of the Second International. This is also true of the appeal to the League of Nations which forms the next part of this document. The social fascist International does not dare, in the present situation, to repeat the old claptrap about the League of Nations being the instrument of peace, about the League of Nations being able and willing to prevent war, so it announces:

"Meanwhile nothing can justify the assumption that the assembly of the League of Nations will offer a less pitiful spectacle of helplessness than the League of Nations Council."

The League of Nations has suddenly become helpless—helpless in the struggle against war—thus is the jeremiad of the apostles of peace of the Second International. True, the leaders of the Second International do not dare to tell the "workers of all countries" to whom they address their appeal, that the League of Nations has in reality supported the Japanese robber war and that even to-day it rejects all idea of interference, in which policy it has the support of Henderson, Vandervelde, Boncour and the rest. And what is the meaning of the "meanwhile" in the sentence quoted above? Why this reservation? Perhaps the League of Nations will yet recall its duty in the struggle against war! At any rate some hope is to be left the workers, even though it be a hope which is patently treacherous!

Let us now consider the demands which the Second International addresses to the League of Nations: "In this situation *moral outlaw* of Japanese imperialism, which has begun the war without even attempting a settlement by arbitration, is the most elementary duty of the League of Nations."

How have the Japanese imperialists hitherto treated the "moral outlaw" demanded by the Second International? The Mikado and the clique of officers who surround him have already given their answer to this "battlecry," they are threatening to resign their membership of the League of Nations. And *who* is to pronounce this "moral outlaw" anyhow? The League of Nations, that is, French and British imperialism? By what right? After all the Japanese are only

giving a repetition in Manchuria of what England and France have been doing for years past in India and Indonesia. They are murdering and laying waste, robbing and plundering, seeking a way out of the crisis at the expense of the working masses! *Only the International Proletariat can present the indictment against imperialism. It only can present the indictment and pass judgment at the same time!*

"We know"—continues the appeal of the Second International—"that the war in Eastern Asia, where the imperialist interests of all the great powers come into collision, may sooner or later kindle a world conflagration, that after the world war of the Atlantic Ocean, we are now menaced by the danger of a new world war in the Pacific Ocean."

The threat of a new world war in the Pacific Ocean! Is not this an official repetition of what the social democratic press was already writing at the beginning of the war in the Yangtse Valley? "The war is far away, it is nothing more than a Sino-Japanese quarrel!" We in Europe are only concerned with the war in so far as our munitions industries are receiving orders and our unemployed work and bread! That is all this phrase about the threat of war in the Pacific Ocean means! Thus the Second International continues its criminal manoeuvres of deception no matter whether it appears as the accuser of Japanese imperialism or as a "fingerpost" for the struggle against war!

The imperialist war has come. It becomes more and more menacing. Japan continues its robber campaign while a new war of intervention against the Soviet Union is being got ready in Manchuria. What effective "means of action" has the Second International to offer the workers of all countries? Let us quote again from the appeal:

"We therefore demand first and foremost that Japan be declared the aggressor! That all granting of credits or supplying of munitions to Japan be instantly stopped! That all means of economic and financial pressure be applied to Japan to compel her to abandon her robber campaign! That none of Japan's conquests in China be recognised even though they should be sanctioned by a treaty forced upon China!"

Who is to put these demands into effect? Again, of course, the League of Nations! French imperialism which openly defends and justifies the predatory excursion of Japan, British imperialism which is on the watch so as not to come too late in the partition of China, the international munitions industry which is doing splendid busi-



ness on the war in China! What more bloody mockery can there be of the workers of all countries than these demands, addressed to the League of Nations?

But the Second International can go one better. Let us quote the next lines of the appeal:

"Workers of all countries!

Compel your governments to fulfil these demands! Do not tolerate the capitalist governments helping to prepare for the next world war either from cowardice or complicity with Japanese imperialism! Demonstrate everywhere against Japanese imperialism, against world imperialism!

Down with imperialism!

Long live peace and disarmament!"

What does this mean? Tardieu and his war cabinet, MacDonald and his "national" government, Brüning and his war president Hindenburg, Mussolini and all the rest of them are to be compelled to fulfil these demands! In what way? Perhaps by means of such petitions as the various parties of the Second International have presented in the "disarmament" conference! The imperialists will certainly appreciate the appeal of the Second International as a support for their actions.

The appeal of the Second International fully meets all the demands which the imperialists make upon social democratic lackeys. For example, while even the capitalist press admits that Japanese imperialism is offering provocation to the Soviet Union, that Japan's robber campaign is in reality the prelude to a war against the Soviet Union—a war which has hitherto been prevented only by the Soviet Union's desire for peace, while Japanese robbers do not even think it necessary to gloss over their acts of provocation with a veneer of diplomacy in the face of such outrageous facts, the *Second International* has *nothing to say*. But precisely this silence suits the present interests of the imperialist robbers, for under this cover they can the more securely weave their plots against the Soviet Union.

And in yet another respect, that which is not included in the Second International's appeal is of the highest importance. This is the question of the rôle of world imperialism in general and of French imperialism in particular. To raise this question would mean revealing the relation of the Second International to world imperialism and to its endeavour to re-partition not only China, but also the whole world by a new imperialist world war. For this same reason the appeal of the Second International does not contain a single word against the system of robbery embodied in the Treaty of Versailles—a system

which contains in itself all the elements of a new imperialist world war.

Vandervelde, Blum, Henderson, Crispian, Wels and all the other heroes of the Second International have shown in the past that they are capable of any infamous act. As Cabinet Ministers in the imperialist governments, they have carried out a brutal, imperialist policy of blood and iron against the Arabs, Egyptians, Indians, Chinese, etc. They give their support to the Versailles system of robbery by which billions of money have been wrung from the bones of the German working class. They remain true to their tradition in their attitude to the war in China and will be more so still when world imperialism marches to a war of intervention against the Soviet Union. The appeal of the Second International is the incontrovertible proof of this fact!

#### IV.

A few days before the appeal of the Second International saw the light of day, the General Council of the English Trade Union Congress, in conjunction with the National Executive of the Labour Party, published a declaration on the situation in the East. The tone and contents of this declaration in no way differ from the appeal of the Second International, and it virtually amounts to an acquittal of Japanese imperialism, for "the war measures were taken on the grounds of unimportant events, for which complete satisfaction would have been obtained, if Japan had made full use of the peaceful methods of settlement provided for in the League of Nations." So the Japanese made a mistake in the choice of means, but the occasion was given by the events in China! In another passage of the declaration this standpoint is repeated and emphasised. It reads: "The political unrest in China is no justification for the intrusion of a foreign power into Chinese territory." Here too the stress is laid on the political unrest in China and not on the robber attack of Japanese imperialism. The declaration further remarks that "the English Government has entered upon a policy of friendly and generous collaboration with the new China," and emphasises that the English Government has declared as early as 1926, "that all the powers should abandon the idea that the economic and political development of China would only be assured by foreign guardianship, and it should be the policy of the powers to try to maintain harmonious relations with China. . . ." This policy, according to the declaration, has led to success and therefore the Labour leaders recommend Japanese imperialism "to replace its policy

of force against China by the policy of friendly collaboration."

What the English Labour leaders demand here is nothing more nor less than a new edition of the old English policy of colonisation—a policy which made an outward show of being liberal in contrast to the French and Dutch colonial policy, but which in reality could vie with French imperialism in the use of cruel methods of oppression. The declaration is directed solely against Japanese imperialism's blatant methods of colonial policy and has on the other hand the aim of bringing about an understanding between Japan and England as to the partition of China. Thus the English Labour leaders make themselves the immediate spokesmen of English imperialism.

## VI.

The attitude of the social-fascist leaders to the war in China is not in the least different from the shameful and criminal attitude of the social chauvinists in 1914. In 1914, too, the leaders of the Second International continued the declarations against the war up to the very last moment. They declared just as they do to-day—that it was a war of imperialist conquest, that it was directed against the interests of the working class and that the blood of millions of workers would be shed in it for an alien cause. This was the last tribute paid by these parties to the pre-war international. The pathetic declarations against war were followed a few days later by an enthusiastic rallying to the imperialist war front, beginning with the voting of war credits and ending with the appointment of leaders of the International to the posts of Cabinet Ministers. These Cabinet Ministers are again at the head of the Second International to-day. If we make a comparison between the Vanderveldes, Blums, Hendersons and Scheidemans of 1914 with the Vanderveldes, Blums, Hendersons and Scheidemans of to-day we can only say that they have not only remained

the same but have developed into open counter-revolutionaries. A very pointed and at the same time instructive example of this has just been afforded us by the German social democrats in the support they gave to the candidature of the war president Hindenburg. The fact that the social fascist leaders have thereby succeeded in mobilising large masses of the social democratic voters to vote for Hindenburg, is a great and serious danger in the present situation when an imperialist war is beginning for the re-partition of the world. The Communist Parties must immediately direct all their forces to convincing the broad working masses that the war has already begun, that on the battlefields of Manchuria and in the Yangtse-Valley preparations are already being made for a new imperialist world war and, in the first instance, for a war of intervention against the Soviet Union. *In the present situation the war question is the central question of the day.* The struggle against war must therefore occupy first place in the whole mass work of the revolutionary movement. Marx, Engels and Lenin have taught us how to conduct the struggle against war. These lessons must become the common property of the entire working class and beyond that of all working elements. In close connection with the spreading of the doctrines of Marx, Engels and Lenin, a systematic campaign must be waged to *unmask the Second International*, and all its organisations in the various countries as the chief organisers of a war of intervention against the Soviet Union and the pavers of the way for a new imperialist world war. We shall only succeed in mobilising the broad masses for an active struggle against war in proportion as we unmask the social fascist leaders as instigators of war and convincingly expose the criminal rôle they are playing, before the eyes of the working class. The utterances of social fascists and reformist leaders which we have here dealt with, provide us with excellent material for this purpose.

**Have you seen number 4/5 of the Communist International? If not! you will find it as interesting as this one. Containing three articles on Great Britain. Sixpence. 72 pages.**



## THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE EXPORT OF MUNITIONS

THE last weeks and months have given the international working class an instructive object lesson on the manner in which a new world war can take place and has, in fact, taken place. Without the slightest formality an imperialist robber State transports its war fleet and its divisions, marches over the territory of an oppressed nation, occupies large areas populated by hundreds of millions, does not move all its armed forces at one moment, but first sends a small "punitive force" into the occupied territory. When this "punitive force" meets with resistance, either from the outraged population or paid provocateurs, then the "punitive expedition" is compelled in "self-defence," to get additional "support" of first, new battalions, and subsequently continually increasing divisions. In the territory which is next to be occupied according to the plan of operations, a threatening attitude on the part of the population and hatred of foreigners is announced or "excesses" engineered to prepare the road for the army of intervention to "restore order." The diplomats of the robber State in question "regret" with the most sympathetic air, the course of events, declaring that their government is not carrying on any war and has never had any intention of doing so, that it is all merely a question of a temporary passing measure of self-protection. They do this in such a manner as if they are themselves quite convinced that their imperialist government is "attacked" and they naturally find complete understanding and "sympathy" throughout the entire capitalist world. The events in China have shown us that earlier so-objectionable formal features of war, such as declaration of war, various pacts and treaties should not be over-estimated. The modern imperialist State is no gallant knight, but an unprejudiced and completely ruthless robber. The events in China show that it is possible to carry on a large-scale war for months without any declaration of war, but it is much more important for us to clearly understand here the lesson from the events in China, namely, that a whole number of imperialist States can carry on a concerted war without any kind of preliminary formal military alliance concluded in diplomatic negotiations. The conception that the imperialist States could not commence a large-scale war, and especially intervention against the Soviet Union in the immediate future, because the diplomatic preparations of the war had not been successfully concluded, as a result of the imperialist contradictions, has been

dealt a heavy blow through the events in China. It is naturally correct and indisputable that the contradictions in the imperialist camp hinder the onslaught on the Soviet Union, but this truth, like every other, only exists within certain limits. Side by side with the contradictions there exists a permanent tendency of united attack against the U.S.S.R. and China. At the present moment this tendency is expressed in a peculiar form.

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The numerous arms and ammunition transports which leave for the East from the most varied countries are the clearest illustrations of how feverishly capitalism to-day seeks the way out of its crisis. There is a real capitalist competition in the supply of war materials. According to newspaper reports, arms and ammunition transports are leaving for the Far East from North Africa, France, England, Belgium, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Sweden, Norway and even from the "permanently neutral" cradle of the League of Nations, Switzerland, among others. And even the Rumanian big landlords allow the statement to appear in their papers that the war in the Far East has increased the demand for Rumanian pigs and oxen.

The workers and the peasant masses who took part in the last world war know from bitter experience that the appetite of the cannon kings and other war profiteers increases with what it feeds on. The larger the theatre of war, the larger and more bloody the battles, the larger the number of killed and wounded, and the longer the war lasts the larger is the demand for war material and the profits. The support of a belligerent country with weapons and munitions is not "neutrality" or "non-interference," but a special means of participation in the war. Actually, the war against the Chinese people is carried on to-day with French airplanes and tanks, English petrol and German high explosives, although momentarily only Japanese troops have actually been in action. The German railways and river transport, as well as the Mercantile Marine of the Scandinavian countries, take part in the war. The Rumanian boyars allow their four-legged oxen and swine to carry on the war, to mention but one or two examples. In this way, in the situation of to-day, the line of demarcation between the imperialist "peace" and imperialist war becomes more and more indistinct and the world slides into a new world massacre. It must be said quite openly that the

campaign of the Communist Parties against the imperialist war in the Far East and the supply of war materials has so far been weak and demands a very serious self-criticism. The supply of munitions goes on unhindered despite the fact that the arms and other war materials are produced and transported by *workers*. What are the reasons for this weakness? Perhaps the workers will not fight against the war? It would be very frivolous did one simply charge the Communist Parties with failing to answer the imperialist war in the Far East and the munition supplies with the General Strike. But it would be equally incorrect and impermissible if one endeavours to explain away one's own helplessness and passivity by claiming that the masses will not fight against the war. Regarding the reasons for the weakness and shortcomings of the Communist Party in the struggle against the war, Lenin wrote in 1922, in his "Remarks on the Tasks of our Delegation to the Hague": "Perhaps the chief means of winning the masses for the war are precisely those sophistries with which the bourgeois press operates, and perhaps the most important ground of our helplessness in regard to the war consists in the fact that we either do not destroy these sophistries or what is more frequently the case, dispose of them with *cheap, boastful and completely empty phrases*. *We will not allow the war*, we understand quite well the criminal nature of a war, and all the rest of it in the spirit of the Basle Manifesto of 1912." It seems to us that the "cheap, boastful and completely empty phrases" about not allowing intervention against the Soviet Union, and about decisive action, *then, when* the imperialists dare to make their onslaught on the Soviet Union still to-day constitutes in the majority of cases the "most important basis of our helplessness in regard to the war."

To illustrate how great and actual the danger really is of misleading the masses through similar revolutionary phrases and giving them a completely false conception as to how a war breaks out, distracting them from the tasks which to-day are on the agenda, we give a few typical examples from the Communist press of recent date.

One Communist paper writes on the events in China: "The proletariat must follow these events with the greatest attention and reply to the imperialists when they commence to aim a blow at the U.S.S.R."

In a newspaper report of a red Trade Union Conference, it is said: "The Conference occupied itself also with the military events in the Far East and accepted a resolution in which it stated that the toilers will range themselves on the side of the Chinese Soviet Districts and the Soviet Union

when the imperialist robber States carry out their onslaught."

Another newspaper writes: "At the present moment we can no longer remain passive onlookers at the onslaughts against the U.S.S.R. Now we must mobilise the defensive front for the Soviet Union in all countries because the day of the direct onslaught on the U.S.S.R. is no longer far distant." The basic error of these statements consists in the fact that they do not raise the question of the decisive struggle against the war, as an immediate question of to-day, but as a more or less future question before the masses. One must watch out, be vigilant and at the most, collect the forces *to-day*, in order to act *then* when the war of intervention "breaks out." This process of thought is not very different, if at all, from the well-known theory of "answering" the war with the General Strike.

In his Remarks on the Tasks of our Delegation to the Hague, Lenin states that in the question of the struggle against war, "the greatest difficulty is to overcome the pre-conception that this is a quite simple, clear and relatively easy question." He did not say this in order to justify the weaknesses and shortcomings of the Communist Parties in the struggle against the war at that time. According to Lenin the chief reason for these weaknesses and shortcomings consisted precisely in the fact that the Communists regarded the struggle against the war much too lightly and disseminated similar views among the masses.

To-day it is no different. If one repeatedly declares to the masses that the time for decisive action to defend the Soviet Union will not come to-day, but later on, when in addition thereto the commencement of intervention is presented as a single sudden stroke on the west frontier of the Soviet Union and the struggle against intervention similarly as a single and sudden stroke on the "outbreak of war," then the result of such an education of the masses can only be the conviction that "it is not so important at the moment," that one will "soon dispose of this" if it ever reaches such a stage. The task of the Communists does not consist in the preparation of a passive restraining attitude in the question of the struggle against the war, but in combatting and overcoming same. It must be made clear to the masses that the defence of the Soviet Union must be expressed to-day, not to-morrow, in bold revolutionary deeds. One must show them how undefinable and misleading such expressions are to-day as "the outbreak of war" and the "day of the direct onslaught on the Soviet Union," how the present war in the Far East has grown from a small "punitive expedition" to a large-scale war, how it spreads like a flame, how the entire



capitalist world is sliding into this war as a result of the other capitalist countries joining in the Japanese robbery expedition in one form or another.

Especially one must show the workers that the imperialists are not preparing a blow against the Soviet Union for the future, but at the present moment are releasing this blow. The feverish mobilisation of the Russian White Guard bands in all directions, their transport to the Far East, their arming and concentration in the frontier districts of the Soviet Union gives unmistakable evidence of this, to give only one example. The fact that nowhere has a serious struggle to prevent the mobilisation of the Russian counter-revolutionary bands taken place, to prevent their transportation, for example, by the seamen or by angry demonstrations before and in the White Guard Recruiting Offices or the corresponding foreign representative's, cannot be explained on the grounds that the workers do not want to struggle against such an obvious counter-revolutionary measure by the most decisive means, but the reason must lie in the fact that they have been insufficiently clarified on the connections in these events. It is declared that the masses will already fight with absolute decisiveness as soon as it is a matter of intervention against the Soviet Union, but that they cannot be moved for active support of the Chinese, either in the form of refusal of productions or transport of weapons. This declaration can only be correct to the extent that the sympathies of the toiling masses in all capitalist countries are on the side of the Soviet Union, that the counter-revolutionary character of an intervention against the Soviet Union is understood by the last worker, and the war against the Soviet Union would be the most unpopular of all wars, encountering the strong resistance of the masses. We have already referred above to the fact that it would be dangerous and frivolous to construe a new theory of the "answer" of the anti-Soviet war with the revolution. Here we have to do with the statement that the workers are prepared to fight actively for the Soviet Union, but not for China. The shortcomings and failures which we have so far experienced cannot serve as a proof of the correctness of such a statement. The circumstance that, so far we have only seen such new, bold, exceptional and really "unparliamentarian actions" by the working masses, as exceptions and not to the extent necessary in the situation of to-day (which is completely new and represents a changed situation), is to be explained, in the first instance by the fact that we Communists have worked in the old accustomed way, when the changed situation demanded from us entirely new methods of

work, lively initiative, bold and rapid action, and also that we have not correctly, or in good time, alarmed the masses.

In most cases we have not made the connection between the present events in China and the preparation of intervention against the Soviet Union really clear and understandable. It depends upon us whether large masses of workers who sympathise with the Soviet Union and are ready to fight for its defence, are made clear that the more successfully the Japanese robber expedition in China develops, the more unhindered and unpunished the capitalists of the other countries support this robbery with their weapons and other war materials, allow their factories, railways and merchant shipping to take part in this war, the less the resistance of the toiling masses, the more sure and swiftly will it come to a united imperialist crusade against the land of proletarian power. In the last months and weeks we Communists have not everywhere and at all times unambiguously explained to the working masses without vacillation that we not only stand for the defence of the Chinese Soviet Districts, but for the defence of the entire Chinese people against the robber expedition of the imperialists, that the war of the Chinese people is no imperialist war, but a national revolutionary war of a people suppressed by international imperialism, that the war is directed against the common enemy of the international working class and the oppressed peoples, against imperialism, and that as a result of the fact that the Chinese Government rests at the moment in the hands of the traitors and hangmen of the Chinese Revolution, the Chinese workers and peasants in addition to the struggle against the foreign imperialists must, at the same time, fight against their own government.

These shortcomings have made it easier for the Social-fascist leaders to confuse the working masses and hold them back from the struggle against the supply of munitions and the other forms of participation in the imperialist robber expedition by their deceptive manoeuvres, their hypocritical feigned sympathy for China, their lies regarding the munition transport for China and their systematic swindle that the armistice is already concluded or "expected at any moment" in China. We must show the masses how important it is for the imperialist war-makers to-day to gain time and to set the machinery of war running as noiselessly as possible so that the mass of the people will, as far as possible, not notice this, and show how the above-mentioned Social-Fascist "friendship for China" hypocrisy directly serves its purpose. We can and must convince the large mass that the point now is not to give the imperialists the peaceful period for the



development of their war machinery which they and their Social-Fascist agents are striving for, but preferably to wade into the imperialists rather to-day than to-morrow.

A one-sided monotonous repetition of the slogan of the defence of the Soviet Union and Soviet China leads unavoidably to the concealment of the simple but extremely important fact that the Communists not merely fight against a war directed against the Soviet Union and Soviet China, but are *against every imperialist war*. It must not be allowed that the less conscious workers come to the false conception that the Communists have actually nothing against war so long as it is not directed against the actual Soviet Power. The danger of such a conception is all the greater and more real since such lies are circulated by the agents of the bourgeoisie. It must also be taken into consideration that the "left" Social-Democrats still succeed to confuse large masses of the workers by their "No More War" campaign, which actually means nothing less than the struggle against the civil war and therefore can never be the slogan of the revolutionary working class, as it serves the interests of the imperialist war-makers.

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We regard it as a pacifist and opportunist mistake when one believes that the supplies of munitions can be fought against by appealing to the bourgeoisie on this question, by making proposals in bourgeois parliaments or to bourgeois authorities, or the munition manufacturers themselves for the cessation of the munition production and the supply of weapons, or perhaps through peaceful delegations verbally protesting to the diplomatic representatives of the war-making imperialist powers. Such proposals and protests hardly serve the purpose of arousing the *anger* of the mass of the people against the war-makers and mobilising them to immediate revolutionary action against the supply of weapons, and this is precisely the point. It is useless to appeal to the armament kings or their parliaments or authorities in this question. One achieves nothing thereby except a further dissemination of the illusions of the easy nature of the struggle against the war. And precisely this is the basic evil. It must be clearly and definitely said that the danger of opportunist passivity and pacifist vacillations in the struggle against war is the chief danger, against which the entire fire must be concentrated inside the Communist Parties. It is absolutely out of place to paint highly-coloured pictures of the danger of the left deviations of terroristic excesses in the question of the struggle against the war in this situation. To-day our misfortune consists, not in extremist actions but in immut-

ability and passivity, in the danger of a helpless capitulation to the war-makers. We must now fight against cowardly opportunism, against the fear of responsibility and initiative and for bold revolutionary deeds in the ranks of the Communists.

The struggle against the war is, in the first place, a mass struggle, but to develop this mass struggle we must appeal to the revolutionary initiative of each individual Communist and to each separate worker working in the munition factories and poison gas hells, in the railway depots, docks and mercantile marine who have various opportunities for effective struggle against the supply of munitions. We must appeal to the initiative and revolutionary passions of the unemployed, agricultural workers and peasants, to the courage of the working women who can support the struggle of the factory workers in the most effective manner, to the conscience of all those workers, men and women, for whom the international solidarity of the toilers is no empty phrase. In connection with the supply of munitions, the phrase: "Control of war-production," is here and there utilised. As already mentioned, there are even a few "sober" and "practical" thinking "friends of China" who desire to introduce such a "differentiation" by a similar control of the supply of munitions, whereby the munition transport to Japan shall be held up by the workers, those to China, however, to be allowed. The senselessness of such a view is obvious. We will not waste words on the obvious impossibility of such a "co-ordination" of the activities of the munition manufacturers with the revolutionary actions of the fighting masses, which the above-mentioned control pre-supposes.

We know that the armament transports to the Far East are practically exclusively bound for Japan. But even accepting that a small fraction of these arms really are destined for the Chinese fighters for freedom, one needs only to ask the question: "What is effective support of the Chinese struggle for freedom against imperialism: decisive revolutionary acts of the working class of the capitalist countries, or a small supply of arms?" to perceive the naiveté of the above-mentioned conception on the control of production.

It is beyond doubt that the revolutionary workers and their organisations must keep the production and transport of war materials under observation. Every step of the imperialist war-makers and their agents must now be closely observed, not in order to "collect material," but to alarm the masses, to convince them of the real actuality of the war, to arouse their rage against the imperialist war-makers and transform this anger into bold revolutionary deeds.



Such an observation cannot be the task of separate individuals or special control committees, but must become the task of the mass itself, every worker in the factory, on the rail, the docks or the ship. The workers must know precisely what they are producing and for what purpose, the railway men and dockers must know what they are transporting and for whom. They must be especially vigilant because the war production and the arms and ammunition transports are more and more frequently disguised under harmless labels to lead the workers astray. According to the newspaper reports the workers have discovered in the last few weeks numbers of cases where high explosives and arms have been loaded as hay, milk or musical instruments or where the workers have been misled regarding the destination of same. All the signs show that Russian white guards are being embarked from capitalist countries as pleasant and harmless passengers. The ~~reads~~ supervision of the activities of the war-makers is naturally of little purpose when it does not lead to an immediate preparation, when it is not a transitional stage to other more active mass actions.

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The conception that to-day one cannot move the workers in the factories (and especially those previously unemployed who have now found employment as a result of the extension of war production) for struggle against the war, but only for struggle for their own partial demands, only for higher wages, that it is now ~~useless~~ to appeal to the international solidarity of the workers, but only to their immediate interests and that the war can best be fought against by the representation of the wage demands of the workers, is fundamentally wrong. This view is nothing but a rebirth of the Trotsky theory of 1927, according to which there is no special struggle against the war, but that the war will be fought against through the sharpening of the general class struggle.

In our view it is sufficient to refer to such a misconception to show the incorrectness and harmfulness of the above-mentioned one. It stands to reason that the struggle against the war must not be separated from the daily struggle of the

workers for better conditions, but it is equally obvious that a Communist Party desirous of being worthy of the name can never renounce, under any circumstances, the revolutionary education of the mass, especially now, of all times.

The statement that it is now useless to appeal to the international solidarity of the workers stands in the most crass contradiction to the history of the revolutionary struggle against the war. It was no short-sighted self-seeking, but the international solidarity of the working class which moved the English transport workers in 1920 to forcefully prevent the departure of the English warships intended for the attack on the Soviet Union. It was not the immediate interests underneath their nose, but the international solidarity of the working class, which drove the German proletarians to decisive acts in the same year by preventing the arms transports to Poland, destroying aeroplanes and armoured cars, breaking up munition transport, shunting arms and ammunition trains into sidings and refusing to take them to Poland. It is the international solidarity which impelled the French sailors of the Black Sea Fleet to their heroic and unforgettable revolt in 1919, on an episode of which *Comrade Marty* could write to Marshal Foch:

"It is a great pity, Mr. Field Marshal, that you could also not see the withdrawal of the French troops from Odessa, when the 19th Artillery Regiment, the 2nd Sappers and the Alpine Artillery Regiment inscribed glorious pages in the history of the revolutionary movement. You should have seen the glorious and triumphant French Army, how happily they rubbed shoulders with the Red Guards in swarms. You should have experienced the magnificent spectacle of whole companies defiling before the building of the Odessa Soviet with the butts of their rifles in the air, singing the 'Internationale.' "

The time has now arrived again when the international solidarity of the working class must find expression in bold, revolutionary deeds, and it is unquestionable that it will find expression to an ever-growing extent. The struggle against the war demands courage and again courage.

L.A.

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